'NYPD Blue' actor ready to turn in badge



McNabb grabs playoff spotlight; **Brady shuns it** Pages 26, 27



Prince Harry apologizes for Nazi costume

Page 7

Page 18

Volume 2. No. 277 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2005

MLB, players adopt tougher steroid policy

Pact includes more frequent testing, penalty for first-time offenders Back page



Iraqi Faisal Faisal, 24, makes a run down the track at the Verizon Sports Complex in Lake Placid, N.Y., during training on Wednesday. Faisal is working toward his goal of become the first Iragi athlete to compete in the Winter Olympics. For the past week, Faisal has been working with U.S. coaches as he learns the sliding sport of skeleton.

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Ne ws Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Yates decision: False testimony from the state's expert witness in a former nurse's capital murder trial was a basis by one juror for convicting the woman of drowning her children in

the family bathtub. Juror Ron Jones wrote the judge in Andrea Yates' case that he had decided she was insane, but changed his mind based on testimony by psychiatrist Park Dietz about an episode of the television show "Law & Order" where a woman was found innocent by reason of insanity for drowning her chil-

No such episode existed.

Earlier this month, a Texas appeals court threw out Yates' convictions in three of her five children's drownings because testimony from Dietz was false and the trial judge had denied a request by defense attorneys to declare a mistrial after it was learned that Dietz's testimony was false

Train gas leak: A week after chlorine gas leaked from a train wreck and killed nine people in Columbia, S.C., officials will let about half the 5,400 residents displaced by the accident return home Thursday morn-

Air quality tests show chlorine has returned to normal levels on the edges of the evacuation area, which extended a mile from the crash site, according to the Aiken

County Sheriff's Office. Conditions remain too dangerous to allow people back into homes and businesses closer to the crash site, near the Georgia line and about 60 miles southwest of Columbia.

World

Transplant baby: A 1-year-old girl who underwent an eight-organ transplant in Miami last year has died in a hospital in northern Italy, officials said Thursday

Alessia Di Matteo died Wednesday at the Istituto Giannina Gaslini hospital in her hometown of Genoa. Officials there said the cause of death was not immediately clear.

Di Matteo's condition was already extremely serious when she was transferred to the

hospital from the United States last month. Di Matteo was born with congenital smooth muscle disorder, which prevented normal function of her stomach, intestines and kidneys. The condition is fatal if left un-

Nazi victims' accounts: Records of more than 3,000 World War II-era Swiss bank accounts were published on the Internet Thursday as part of an effort to return hundreds of millions of dollars to Nazi victims or their descendants.

The publication was the result of a settlement reached in June between the banks and Nazi victims

The banks' refusal to release the records had angered Holocaust survivors and infuriated a federal judge overseeing the case. "It marks a last chance to repay what is

owed, a last chance to repay a debt that goes back over half a century," said Gideon Tay-lor, executive vice president of the court-appointed tribunal that oversees disbursement of the funds

The list of names was posted to the Web site of the tribunal overseeing the distribution of the funds - www.crt-ii.org

Pinochet bail: A Chile appeals court on Wednesday approved freedom on bail for former dictator Gen

Augusto Pinochet, who has been under house arrest pending trial for

nine kidnappings and one homicide during his long regime. The Santiago Court of Appeals' ruling con-firmed a lower court judgment for bail earli-

er this week Pinochet's chief defense lawyer, Pablo Rodriguez, asked the court to lower the \$3,500 amount court refused

Pinochet has been under house arrest for



Garage shooting: David Lynn Jordan, center, is escorted by Jackson Police Officer Tommy McLean, left, and Lt. Chip Holland of the Madison County Sheriff's Department, in Jackson City Court on Wednesday in Jackson, Tenn. Judge Blake Anderson ordered Jordan, the suspect in a shooting rampage at a state maintenance garage, jailed without bond on three counts of first-degree murder and two charges of attempted first-degree murder. No plea was entered pending appointment of a defense attorney.

Rabin's assassin: The assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will be punished for having physical contact in his cell with the woman he says he has married, a prison spokeswoman said Thursday.

The woman, Larisa Trimbobler, kissed Yigal Amir on the cheek during a visit Thursday, Prison Service spokeswoman Orit Stelser said.

Amir returned the kiss and the two started hugging and fondling each other before a prison warden intervened, Stelser said.



BRUPES WAS SNATCH THE TURNED ASIS BECAME WALLOF

MOSAIC 9000 Jumbies: LSOLE HUBSY

Correction

The Jumble puzzle in Wednesday's edition contained multiple errors because of a production error. The number of squares did not match the number of letters for clues three and four. Each of those clues should have six squares. The answer is WREST STOP.

Judge: Jackson hearing on alleged prior abuse will be held in open court

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — The judge in the Michael Jackson child-molesta-tion case has ruled that a hearing about allegations of past sexual misconduct by the singer will not be held behind closed

doors The Wednesday by Su-perior Court Judge Rodney Melville was a victory for the news media and

the prosecution, which both opposed

a defense motion to hold a hearing on

the issue away



from reporters. "I was very pleased that the judge recognized the California Supreme Court ruling that hearings such as admission of evidence be held in open court," media attorney

Theodore Boutrous Jr. said. The judge said he will schedule the arguments after the jury is selected. Jackson's lawyers had contended that holding

an open hearing on the alleged prior of fenses would influence prospective ju-

Jackson was not present Wednesday The 46-year-old pop star is charged with plying a boy with alcohol and molesting

him. Jury selection begins Jan. 31 Pretrial hearings have been set for Jan. 21 and Jan. 27 to consider issues including whether a child-abuse expert can testify, the questionnaire to be given to jurors and other motions on admission of evidence

The judge has also ordered TV correondent Martin Bashir to come to California to testify in the trial on March 1.

Bashir produced the 2003 TV docu-

mentary in which Jackson said that he let children sleep in his bed but that it was not sexual.

Bashir is now a correspondent for ABC News, which said Wednesday it will fight the subpoena

"We feel strongly that the California shield law protects the rights of journal-ists who cannot be — or be perceived to be — arms of either the prosecution or de-fense as they pursue the news," ABC News Vice President Jeffrey Schneider

Iraqi forces will lead vote security, Batiste says

BY LEO SHANE III Stars and Strines

WASHINGTON - U.S. forces will play a behind-the-scenes role during the Iraqi elections later this month and Iraqi security forces will be the visible security presence at the polls, according to the U.S. commander of military forces in north central

Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste said Thursday that he has seen great improvement in the Iraqi security forces over the last few months, and believes having them directly monitor voting - instead of U.S. troops

U.S. to provide 'quick support as necessary'

will give more legitimacy to the election

"This is an election for Iragis, by Iragis," he said. "It's important this be an Iraqi-run election.

"You'll see Iraqi security forces at polling stations and around polling stations. They know exactly where polling stations are and have developed plans to secure them. We'll operate from a distance and

provide quick support as necessary Batiste praised the Iraqi military and police units as courageous and diverse, saying that Kurds. Shiites and Sunnis are all represented in the forces.

He said threats and direct attacks on the forces have increased dramatically in the last few weeks, which he takes as a sign that the domestic soldiers are becoming more effective and more problematic for

Army officials said since Oct. 1, Iraqi forces have killed about 200 insurgents and captured about 1.400 in operations

with U.S. military personnel and in independent missions

"Leading up to the elections we expect [insurgents] to go after Iraqi security forces when they can find them in small numbers and to continue to attack us from a distance," Batiste said. "But there is no shortage of brave Iragis who want to stand up

Batiste said he expects elections to take place throughout central Iraq, despite comments from interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi earlier this week calling parts of the country too unstable to take part

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Gunmen kill aide to pro-election Iraqi cleric

BY SINAN SALAHEDDIN The Associated Press

BAGHDAD - Gunmen killed a representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Irag's most senior Shiite Muslim cleric, along with the aide's son and four bodyguards in a town south of Baghdad, an official in the cleric's office said Thursday.

Insurgents trying to derail Iraq's Jan. 30 elections appeared to be sending a message to al-Sistani. who strongly supports the vote.

Insurgents have targeted electoral workers and candidates. Elsewhere, gunmen opened fire

on a minibus picking up a Turkish businessman from the Bakhan Hotel in central Baghdad on Thursday, killing six Iraqis and kidnapping the Turk, who reportedly ran a construction company that worked with U.S.-led occupa-

Sheik Mahmoud Finian, al-Sistani's representative in the town of Salman Pak, 10 miles southeast of Baghdad, was shot dead Wednesday night as he was returning home from a mosque where he performed the evening prayers, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The aide's son and four bodyguards also were killed, the official said at al-Sistani's office in the Shiite holy city of Naiaf.

Shiites make up 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people and are expected to dominate the 275-member National Assembly in the first free elections held in Iraq since it became independent

Some Sunnis, who are 20 per-



Iraqis have their morning tea Thursday next to electoral posters featuring the Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in Baghdad. The elections planned for Jan. 30 are the first democratic elections in Iraq since the country was formed in 1932. If many Sunnis do boycott the vote, the United Iraqi Alliance

stands to dominate the assembly,

whose main job will be to write a

Interim Prime Minister Avad Al-

lawi on Thursday reiterated that

the Jan. 30 elections shouldn't be

cent of the population, fear a loss of the dominance and privilege they enjoyed for decades. Sunni clerics have called for a boycott.

Al-Sistani has urged Iraqis to vote, calling it a religious duty for every man and woman. The cleric is not running himself but is backing the 228 candidates from the United Iraqi Alliance, a coalition of 16 groups that includes Iraq's largest Shiite political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Irag

concerns about security. lawi told Al-Arabiya television.

permanent constitution.

postponed despite some groups' There are calls for postponing for the sake of postponing and I don't think this helps Iraq,"

"One of the ways to end the insurgency is to continue going forward with the political process and that Iraqis participate in the political process, including elec-tions," Allawi said.

Meanwhile, oil resumed flowing through a major pipeline linking Kirkuk's oil fields with the northern refinery of Beiji following a three-week stoppage caused by a Dec. 23 sabotage attack, an official with the North Oil Co. said Thursday

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,356 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associat-ed Press count. At least 1,068 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said

The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Wednesday

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Po-land, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary Latvia and Kazakhstan one

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,218 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 959 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's num-

The latest deaths reported by the military: ■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department

■ No identifications report-

U.S. concedes Jan. 30 election in Iraq may not run smoothly

WASHINGTON - Administration officials say the Iraqi elections at the end of the month will be less than perfect, but nonetheless will pave the way for a drawdown of U.S. troops.

"The election is not going to be perfect," White House press secretary Scott McClel-lan said Wednesday. "This is the first time Iraqis will be able to freely choose their leaders. It's for a transitional government, and it's one of three elections that will take place over the course of this year.'

Separately, Secretary of State Colin Powell said American troops will begin leaving this year as the Iraqi army, national guard and police force take on a larger security

"But I cannot give you a timeline when they will all be home," Powell said in an in-terview with National Public Radio that was released by the State Department on Wednesday

Powell has said it is imperative for the elections to go forward as planned to give more credence to the concept that insurgents are fighting an Iraqi government rather than an American occupation force.

The U.S. military's ground forces commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, has said that while most of Irag's 18 provinces are secure enough for the elections to proceed, security remains poor in four provinces. Those provinces - Nineveh, Anbar, Salahadin and Baghdad — are home to about 25 percent of Iraq's population.

McClellan said coalition forces and the Iraqi government are "working to address those ongoing security challenges

"We want to make sure that there's as broad a participation as possible in those elections," he said. One idea being considered is to let people who are prevented from voting by violence to vote later.

White House officials said that while there has been little preparation for the vote in Anbar province and part of Ninthat ballots can be distributed, voting lists drawn and polling places set up by Jan. 30.

One provision that may help overcome logistical challenges and encourage turnout in troubled provinces is to allow people in those parts of the country to vote anywhere they like, rather than only at a speci-

fied polling place, officials suggested In Iraq, 14 million of Iraq's 26 million people have so far registered to vote, according to the White House. There are 111 political parties and other entities competing for shares of representation in the member National Assembly. The results of the Jan. 30 election are not to be an-nounced until around Feb. 15.

Battalion takes on many duties in Afghanistan

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY Stars and Stripes

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan They have become a rather indispensable lot, the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery

Like many Army units these days, this 25th Infantry Division unit has been working somewhat out of its "lane." The howitzers that the unit brought from Hawaii are still in their rightful places, but so much more has been asked of the soldiers who fire the guns or support triggermen.

"We're all over the place," said Maj. David Flynn, the unit commander. "It's something definitely different from what I'm used to as an artillery guy."

In the months leading up to its deployment from Schofield Barracks on the island of Oahu, the hattalion was gearing up for what it does best, Flynn said, Then, late in the planning stages, the mission expanded to include infantry work and other duties



Maj. David Flynn

"On a daily basis you're asked

to do things that you won't normal-

ly do [in your military occupation-al specialty]," Sgt. Hamzat Saba

said. "You adapt and overcome."

The range of additional duties

runs the gamut, from drug inter-

diction and weapons seizures to

checkpoints and foot patrols.

When the holy month of Ra-

madan ended in November the



served during Ramadan.

"Normally, food distribution is

The same can't be said for Sgt

Frank Villa, a cook assigned to

the unit. But since food prepara-

tion is contracted out Villa's culi-

not our game," Flynn quipped.





Capt. Nathan Wilbourn

nary skills aren't needed, unless unit brought some goats, sheep and rice to some Afghans so they his colleagues desire a tip to spice could celebrate the festival of up their Meals, Ready to Eat. Eid, which breaks the fasting ob-These days, a person is more likely to see Villa toting a gun

than a spatula. "You learn as you go," Villa

In addition to the extra duties, the battalion is patrolling an area that is considerably larger than the one its predecessor, the 10th Mountain Division, had when it was in the region.

Capt. Nathan Wilbourn figures the current area of operations is 10 times the size, explaining the New York division primarily stuck to the areas near stuck to the areas near the air-field. By contrast, the bulk of the artillery battalion hounces around five provinces

"A lot of these villages [in the new areas] had not been contacted by U.S. forces before," Wil-bourn said. "The outlying areas are important, too."

In some of these remote places, Villa said, the children seemed afraid of the GIs.

"The kids," he explained,

would run into the house" at the sight of a U.S. patrol rolling through town Over time, the kids stopped run-

ning, and the artillery battalion has settled nicely into its expanded role. "These guys," Flynn said, "are

just average Americans out there trying to make things happen.

Pvt. Thanh Tran serves as an honor guard while soldiers line up to salute their fallen comrade, Spc. Curtis L. Wooten, during a memorial service Wednesday at Ledward chapel in Schweinfurt, Germany. Wooten died when a roadside bomb exploded Jan. 4 near the armored Humvee in which he was riding as the gunner in Iraq KRISTEN CHANDLER TOTH



Eulogies praise GI from Army family

BY STEVE LIEWER Stars and Stripe

Spc. Curtis L. Wooten lived the Army life, from his birth to soldier parents at Fort Riley, Kan., in 1984. to his own enlistment during the war on terrorism 18 years later.

He died a soldier, too, when a roadside bomb exploded Jan. 4 in Iraq near the armored Humvee in which he was riding as the gunner.

"I feel pride in his service because he followed what I did,' his father, Curtis Wooten Sr., a Persian Gulf War veteran from Junction City, Kan., told the Se-attle Post-Intelligencer newspaper last weekend. "But it sucks that it ends this way

Dozens of friends gathered

Wednesday at the Ledward Barracks chapel in Schweinfurt, Germany, to remember Wooten, 20, of the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, four days after his buddies paid tribute to him in a service at a base near Balad, Iraq.

Wooten followed his parents to Army bases around the world until he was 10. Then they divorced and he went to live with his mother, Dairyene, in Spanaway, Wash,

After graduating from high school in 2002, he ioined the Army to get money for college. He hoped

to run his own video production company someday, his father told the Post-Intelligencer. Wooten trained as a tanker at Fort Knox, Ky., and

joined the 1-77 Armor on Jan. 7, 2003. Thirteen months later, the unit deployed to Iraq as an infantry battalion, leaving most of its armored vehicles in Germany. His unit had joined in Operation Baton Rouge, the

liberation of Samarra in late September, and he had just returned to Iraq after spending two weeks at home with his family at Christmas.

In eulogies read at Wednesday's service, members of his unit remembered Wooten as a man who was quick with a quin

"Wooten always made me laugh, no matter how bad the mission," said Capt. Eric Gagnon, his compa-ny commander, "Curtis was the guy that always took the new guy in and made him feel a part of the

Lt. Col. David Hubner, the battalion commander. praised Wooten as a brave soldier who loved his fam-- and haunted the dance clubs of Schweinfurt when the unit was in Germany.

"He was quite possibly the best dancer in town," Hubner said. "His friends marveled at his ability to watch a music video, break down the dance steps and learn the newest moves effortlessly."

Besides his parents. Wooten is survived by one brother, one sister, one half-brother and one half-sis-

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Interim Iraqi leader: U.S. invasion deposed 'dynasty of villains'

BY ANGELA DOLAND The Associated Press

- Even though no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq, the country's interim president said Thursday that the U.S.-led invasion still served a purpose: to rid Iraq of "a dynasty of villains."

Ghazi al-Yawer was in Paris for talks and lunch with French President Jacques Chirac. Discussions touched on topics from Iraq's scheduled Jan. 30 elections to a French journalist missing in

Afterward, al-Yawer was asked if the war in Iraq was worth it in light of the U.S. acknowledgment Wednesday that no weapons of mass destruction were uncovered and the search had ended.

"What has happened has hap-pened," the Iraqi president told reporters, speaking in English. "But the war rid Iraq of a vicious regime which established a dynasty of villains."

"I'm not going to go into a hypothetical answer, but right now we are in the middle of a political process," and the country is determined to make the elections a success, he said.

The suspicion that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was the United States' justification for leading an international coalition to invade Iraq — a move vigorous ly opposed by France.

Chirac and al-Yawer pressed concern about a French reporter missing in Iraq. Flo-rence Aubenas of Liberation newspaper and her Iraqi translator. Hussein Hanoun al-Saadi. were last seen Jan. 5.



Iran's interim President Sheik Ghazi al-Yawer, left, shakes hands with French President Jacques Chirac after their meeting Thursday at the Elysee Palace in Paris. The al-Yawar is on a four-day visit in France.

French officials said they have had no confirmation of claims the were kidnapped. al-Yawer referred to an "abduc-

He did not give any concrete

"It's another manifestation of blind terrorism that makes no distinction between human beings, religions, sex or nationality, al-Yawer said.

Speaking about the elections scheduled for Jan. 30, al-Yawer said his country must do every thing possible to encourage all Iragis to vote.

Chirac agreed with him that ne voting must go ahead as scheduled, despite continued violence, he said. The French president did not speak to reporters.

Car bombings continue to surge in Iraq

Since June, when interim government was installed, at least 181 attacks have occurred

BAGHDAD - Car bombs echo across Baghdad and a constellation of cities around Iraq nearly every day, inflicting slaughter and billowing oily smoke, a reminder to all who see or hear them that the country's insurgents can strike almost any-

Vehicles packed with explosives, often detonated by suicide attackers, have be-come one of the insurgency's most lethal weapons.

An Associated Press tally shows there have been at least 181 of them since Iraq's interim government took over June 28 just a handful at first but surging to a rate of one or more a day in recent mor

Those hombs killed about 1 000 neonle both Iragis and Americans, and wounded twice as many. The tally found that 68 bombings were suicide attacks and the rest were detonated by other means. Most involved cars, but some used trucks and even motor-

Less common before June, car bombs have become part of a punishing psychological campaign that has made almost every-one here feel unsafe. They have been used to assassinate Iraqi leaders, attack troop and police convoys, penetrate U.S. armored vehicles being rushed to the country and, seemingly, simply to spread terror.

While American officials say roadside bombs, known as improvised explosive devices, are still the insurgents' most favored weapon, car bombs are often more powerful and usually exact a higher toll.

The spike in recent months supports De fense Department statements that guerrillas are using more lethal explosives to tartroops and intimidate Iraqis ahead of Jan. 30 elections.



The charred remains of a bus sits at the site of a suicide car bombing in Baqouba, Iraq, on July 28. A suicide car bomb exploded outside a police recruiting center killing 70 Iraqis and wounding 56. An Associated Press tally shows there have been at least 181 car bombs since Iraq's interim government took over on June 28.

"The insurgents have modified their tactics to address modifications the U.S. has made to protect its forces," said David L. Phillips, a former U.S. State Department expert on Iraq who is now with the Council on Foreign Relations. "Because there's been a big push to get armored vehicles, hard-shelled vehicles on the road, and they are less susceptible to IEDs, whereas a car bomb still has greater payload."

The bombing total was compiled from AP's daily reports, based on government and police statements as well as information gathered by AP staff. No official statistics on such attacks have been publicly released and the number of incidents is almost certainly higher than reported.

The U.S. military and the Iraqi government were asked for their figures but pro-

According to the AP tally, there were two car bombs on the last day of June, 11 in July and 12 in August. The numbers surged in the following months, with 26 in September. 43 in October and 48 in November of them on a single day, Nov. 6. December saw 27 and January is averaging about one a day — a dozen in the first 11 days.

While news of car bombings has become tragically routine, their frequency is an enormous change. The Brookings Institution in Washington, which keeps track of suicide bombings and car bombs that kill two or more people, counted just 84 such attacks in the 12 months through last June.

Car bombs are a chief reason why, heading into Iraq's elections, vehicles will not be allowed anywhere near polling stations, and neonle traveling between districts will need to have a separate accreditation for their

As the bombings have progressed, more and more have involved suicide bombers, with almost all this month being suicide at-

Iraqi and American soldiers have developed a routine for potential car bombs, referred to in the military as VBIEDs, for vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. When a car approaches a patrol or check-point without slowing down, a soldier fires a

If that doesn't stop the driver, soldiers shoot at the car's engine, and if that fails, fire at the driver. If it keeps coming, many hit the ground, and pray,

Car bombings have drastically changed the way American troops operate. Patrols view every car with suspicion, and vehicles must stay about 100 yards behind. On narrow roads, approaching cars must pull over as a U.S. convoy drives by, sometimes just inches away. The strain on troops is clear.

The strategy is clear. The vehicle bombs have given the insurgents a potent weapon against the world's most technologically advanced military.

Airmen deploying to Mideast welcome AEF rotation schedule

BY RON JENSEN Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England - Staff Sgt. Stephon Gaines of the 48th Services Squadron at RAF Lakenheath is becoming an old hand at deploying to the Middle East

He departed Wednesday afternoon for his third visit to the region, along with about 200 of his comrades from the 48th Fighter Wing

"When they tell you, 'We are going to leave,' I know everything to take," he said.

Even better, he said, the deployment came as no surprise, thanks to an Air Force concept called Air and Space Expeditionary Force. which is designed to put some predictability in an airman's life.

"When you get back, you know you have 15 months to prepare yourself to deploy again," he said.

The AEF concept has been around for about a decade, and it has proved its worth in recent years as the operations tempo has increased, say people who have scheduled their lives around it.

The idea of prepackaged, tailored air forces suffered a few bumps when the global war on terrorism began in 2001, jumbling the schedule and requiring some adjustments.

But it now has smoothed out into a program that gives Air Force members the luxury of planning their lives beyond next month, not worrying about a surprise deployment, airmen are happy to admit. Most airmen deploy for four months at a time, then have 15 months until the next deployment.

"You can go to school and stuff," said Gaines, a 10-year Air Force veteran

"It does add, for the majority of our people, some stability," said Brig. Gen. Mark T. Matthews, the commander of the 48th Fighter Wing, which is the lead wing for next deployment cycle. AEF 4.

More than 1.000 members of the 48th Fighter Wing are in the process of deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility this month.

The 494th Fighter Squadron has already flown several of its F-15E Strike Eagles to the region.

Other groups of airmen will be deploying in the next week or two, but the group that was lounging around the passenger terminal Wednesday at RAF Mildenhall was the largest single group

The Air Force would not release specific destinations for security reasons Dr. (Lt. Col.) Joseph Anderson,

flight surgeon with the 48th Aerospace Medical Squadron, will be chief of aerospace medicine where he is going.

He's known about this deployment since arriving in England in the middle of 2003.

"(The AEF) does lend predictability, absolutely," he said

The early heads-up provided him time to do the training needed for his specific job, he said. Plus, it also gave him time to savor the opportunity to pay back the Air Force for the training it "I'm actually very excited," he

"The investment they've made in me is just tremendous Senior Master Sgt. Antonio Johnson of the 48th Munitions

Squadron at RAF Lakenheath is making his second trip to the area. He says the AEF concept is

"I'm living proof," he said. Once he returned from the area

in late 2003, he knew he could relax for all of 2004 before joining another AEF rotation.

"If anybody in the Air Force has complaints," he said, "(they should) talk to our Army brothers and sisters

Soldiers not only serve longer deployments downrange than Air Force members — 12 months compared to four or six — they often receive shorter notice of the deployments.

As he waited for a signal to board the contracted aircraft wait. ing outside in the cold English sunshine, Johnson gazed around the terminal at airmen who were sleeping, talking, reading or just sitting alone.



Senior Airman Gabriel Saunders of the 48th Civil Engineer Squadron at RAF Lakenheath, England, catches some shut-eye Wednesday before deploying with a couple hundred other 48th Fighter Wing members to the Middle East.

"I recognize some of the faces that were down there with me last time," he said.

That's a comfort, too, he said, because the experienced airmen will benefit those who have not been to the area.

"It makes them feel at ease when they're down there with someone who's been down there before," he said.

One person on his first deployment is Senior Airman Paul Cennaro of the 48th Civil Engineer Squadron.

"Looking forward to it." said

the 22-year old native of Long Island, N.Y. "I signed up to do my job, serve my country and be the best civil engineer I can be.

Cepparo signed up for the Air Force shortly before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that prompted the ongoing global war on terror. He and his family lost friends among the firefighters who died that day at the World Trade Center.

So did his wife's family 'It was a hard moment for all of

us." he said. "That's why we have to (deploy) — to make sure it doesn't happen again."

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Air Force loosing top leaders, official says

BY ROBERT BURNS The Associated Press

WASHINGTON -Force's top weapons-buying offi-cial said Wednesday his service is suffering from a leadership vacuum, and he predicted a further exodus of senior officials in the fallout from a feud with Congress over a proposed plane leasing

deal with Boeing Co. Marvin Sambur, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, told a group of reporters that the Air Force is feeling the effects of low morale as a re

Senior officials leaving in fallout over Boeing deal

sult of the conflict, which centers on claims that senior Air Force officials pushed for a sweetheart

"There's a vacuum in several positions with three-star generals, two-star generals - nobody's getting confirmed," Sambur said.

In October, Air Force Gen, Gregory Martin withdrew his nominaon to be the next commander of U.S. Pacific Command after he came under fire for the Boeing deal during a confirmation hear-

Air Force Secretary James Roche is stepping down next week with no replacement yet nominated. Peter Teets, the Air Force undersecretary and director of the National Reconnaissance Office, will take over as the senior Air Force civilian until a

new secretary is confirmed. Sambur also is quitting

"There are many people who are lining up to leave." Sambur said, adding that some of the Air

Force's most important organizations, including Air Combat Command, are being affected

Lt. Gen. Ronald E. Keys has been nominated to take command of Air Combat Command, but the Senate has not yet confirmed him. Keys would replace Lt. Gen. Bruce A. Wright, who has been nominated but not yet confirmed by the Senate to take command of U.S. Forces Japan and Pacific Air

The Air Force official who nego-

tiated the original aerial tanke leasing deal with Boeing, Darleen Druvun, pleaded guilty in federal court last year to conspiracy. She began serving a nine-month prison sentence in Florida this month.

Druvun admitted that she began job talks with Boeing while she was overseeing negotiations on the tanker deal

The \$23 billion tanker contract has since been nullified, and the Pentagon has asked Congress to investigate a wide range of contracts in which Druvun was in-

Associated Press Writer Matthew Daly contributed to this story.



Iraqi Faisal Faisal, left, waits his turn as another skeleton racer pushes off for a run down the track at the Verizon Sports Complex in Lake Placid, N.Y., during training on Wednesday.

One Iraqi man's dream: Winter Olympics or bust

By JOHN KEKIS The Associted Press

ALBANY, N.Y. - It doesn't snow much where 24-year-old Faisal Faisal grew up, it only seems to rain bullets, mortar shells and rockets

And yet the violence in Baghdad has only served to motivate him to dream an improbable dream - to become the first Iraqi athlete to compete in the Winter Olympics.

"We've never attempted any winter sports before as a country and we're going through difficult times," Faisal said in a telephone interview Wednesday from Lake Placid, where he's learning the sliding sport of skeleton. "If your country gets invaded, it's just a feeling of defeat you get inside if you're proud of your country. It doesn't make you feel so good.

"Our country was going back-ward," Faisal said. "I won't be able to make big changes, but any change counts. I'll try to do my part.

Faisal who grew up in a mid. dle-class family with a civil engineer for a father and an architecture teacher for a mother, began his Olympic quest in 1998. After watching the Nagano Games on television, he left Baghdad to study business in Australia and wanted to qualify for the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City in either Alpine skiing or snowboarding

That ended in failure

"The Iraqi Olympic Committee was not recognizing me and didn't want to get involved in winter sports," said Faisal, who has relied on his family for financial support. "I've been prom-ised a lot of things, but they were just hurdles."

This has not been an easy journey. Faisal lost contact with his family during Operation Iraqi Freedom because the phone lines were cut off and a good friend was killed in the fighting in his homeland.

And there are always the political questions that distract from his athletic goals.
"I can't escape who I am. I'm

not just an athlete," he said. "I guess I could always get away with saying I just want to talk about sports. Because our country is so divided, if you make any statement on politics many people won't like it.

Undeterred, Faisal figured he might be able to satisfy his need for speed by calling the U.S. Boband Skeleton Federation (USBSF) in Lake Placid and

when he did they offered to help. The USOC intervened and asked the Iraqi Olympic Com-mittee to recommend Faisal as an athlete.
"The USOC has made all this

possible. They gave me the opportunity to come out and try, Faisal said, "If it wasn't for them, no one would have belned me. Now, they're pretty much supporting me 100 percent."

Guard testifies in defense of Graner

Says GI didn't commit some of alleged abuses

BY T.A. BADGER The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas - A former guard at Abu Ghraib prison testified Thursday that intelligence officers wanted detainees roughed up there, and that Spc. Charles Graner Jr. did not take part in a number of the abuses he is accused of committing.

the defense former Spc. Megan Ambuhl, admitted under cross-examination that she had had a brief sexual relationship with Graner and remains a close friend.

"And you don't want your friend to go to jail?" asked Maj. Michael Holley, the prosecutor "No sir" she answered

Ambuhl, who made a plea deal with prosecutors regarding her own actions at Abu Ghraib, also said she lied to investigators who sought to search her personal computer for photos and other evidence of abuse

Graner, 36, is the first soldier to

be tried in the Abu Ghraib scandal and is alleged to be the ringleader of the abuse. He is accused of conspiracy to abuse detainees. assault, dereliction of duty and committing indecent acts, and faces up to 171/2 years in prison if convicted The defense maintains that mili-

tary and civilian intelligence agents controlled Graner's area of Abu Ghraib, and that Graner had to follow their orders to soften up prisoners for interrogation. Ambuhl testified that intelli-

gence officers directed the prison's guards to rough up and sexually humiliate detainees, and that the guards were praised for their

On one occasion, she said, an intelligence officer known as Steve told guards to "break" a prisoner known as al-Qaida, who was believed to have valuable informa-"Steve told us that we were

doing a good job and that breaking al-Qaida would save a lot of

Army Spc. Charles Graner arrives for his court-martial at Fort Hood. Texas, on Thursday.

lives," she said.

Another time, she said, two military intelligence officers told Graner to physically abuse a pris-

Among other things, Graner is accused of stacking naked detainees in a human pyramid and later ordering them to masturbate while other soldiers took photographs. He also allegedly punched one man in the head hard enough to knock him out. and struck an injured prisoner with a collapsible metal stick.

Article 32 ends for SEAL accused of abusing Iraqi

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO - Prosecutors said actions by a Navy SEAL lieutenant accused of abusing an Iragi at Abu Ghraib prison were "unacceptable by any standard. while the officer's lawver said nothing he did warranted a court-martial.

The arguments came as a five-day Article 32 hearing, the equivalent of a civilian grand jury, concluded Wednesday. The Navy's top SEAL, Rear Adm. Joe Maguire, will decide whether the officer should face court-martial He did not say when he would issue his recommendation.

Prosecutors said the lieutenant who was not identified, posed in degrading photos with the handcuffed and hooded prisoner, who died a short time later. The SEAL was accused of assault, maltreatment and conduct unbecoming an officer for his handling of detain-

Defense attorney Matthew Freedus said the government's witnesses contradicted one another and that Navy guidelines about taking pictures of detainees was unclear.

In the photos, which were shown in court, the lieutenant flashed a thumbs-up while his men pointed their weapons at a hooded and handcuffed detainee in the back of a Humvee. In another photo the lieutenant is seen kneeling next to another detainee lying on the ground wearing a pumpkin mask.

Much of the evidence in the case centered on Iraqi Manadel al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility.

Al-Jamadi was captured by SEALs during a joint CIA-special operations mission in November 2003. He died a few hours later under CIA interrogation in the shower room at Abu Ghraib pris-

The hearing ended without an answer to the question of what role the CIA played in al-Jamadi's death.

Freedus was prevented from asking a former Army criminal investigator who led an inquiry into the death last year what position the prisoner was in when he died. The Navy officer reviewing the evidence, Lt. Cmdr. William Boland, said the question was "material, but not relevant." He added that he would not recommend any charges related to al-Jamadi's death.

The hearing was conducted under special security precau-tions. A naval security officer monitored the hearing and halted testimony to avoid disclosing classified information. Reporters were cleared from the courtroom numerous times.

IN THE WORLD

Indonesia: Some aid missions need escorts

Government fears rebel attacks on relief efforts; large-scale fumigation planned

BY JIM GOMEZ

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Indonesia on Thursday ordered foreign aid workers in tsunami-devastated Aceh province to have military escorts in areas facing violence by insurgents, even as the vice president welcomed accase-fire offer by the rebels. The total death toll from the disaster rose to more than 157,000.

Relief groups have not reported any security problems in Aceb, where rebels have fought a low-level separatist war against government troops for three decades, and some worried that the new restrictions could harm their reputation for independence.

But Indonesian military spokesman Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki said in a telephone interview that the army considers only the areas around the provincial capital Banda Aceh and the stricken coastal town of Meulaboh safe for foreigners.

"Other areas aside from that are potential trouble spots," he said. Anyone going to the troubled zones must take military escorts. But Basuki warned: "We don't have enough personnel to secure everyone."

Health officials, meanwhile, planned a massive spraying campaign starting Friday in Indonesia's disaster zone to head off threat of malaria, which one expert said could kill up to 100,000 people in the coming months if authorities don't act quickly to kill mosquitoes.

Indonesia's Social Affairs Ministry raised the country's official death toll from the Dec. 26 disaster to 110,229, an increase of nearly 4,000. Sumatra island's Aceh province was worst hit, with the number of people missing there at more than 12,000, with 703,518

Death tolls also went up in India

— by 345, to 10,672 — and in Sri
Lanka — by six, to 30,899. The
overall toll across 11 nations
stands at 157,642.

Indonesia's restrictions which include an order that aid workers declare their travel plans or face expulsion — highlight its sensitivity over foreign involvement in the humanitarian effort, especially that of troops from the United States, Australia, Singapore and Japan.

The security measures represent an effort to regain control of Aceh and the west coast of Sumatra island. Before the disaster, the military controlled Aceh with a tight grip, and foreign journalists and aid workers were barred. Widespread rights abuses were reported.

Rebel leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a cease-fire they declared hours after the Dec. 26 earthquake that sent killer waves fanning out across the Indian Ocean.

Indonesia's vice president welcomed the cease-fire offer. "Indonesia will also make efforts toward it," Jusuf Kalla said

at the vice presidential palace.
The U.S. ambassador to Indonesia urged Jakarta and rebels to negotiate peace. "Both sides should get together quickly, negotiate a settlement and get on with rebuilding Aceh," ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe said Thursday.

Kalla said Tuesday that Indonesia wants the foreign troops to leave the country by late March sooner if possible. Survivors among the tens of thousands living in refugee camps welcomed the foreign troops, which have been flying helicopter aid missions to otherwise inaccessible areas and running field hospitals.



Lakshmi, 28, makes an earthen oven Thursday in the ruins of what was her kitchen at Karaikkal Medu village, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, Lakshmi's house was destroyed in the Dec. 26 tsunami.

USS Duluth to deliver aid near Sri Lanka rebel stronghold

BY TINI TRAN

The Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS DU-LUTH, Sri Lanka — The USS Duluth was bound for eastern Sri Lankan shores on Thursday to carry out tsunami relief work that will bring it close to areas controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels.

The amphibious assault ship, with 400 Marines and 400 Nav personnel aboard, set sail two days after it anchored off the southern coast, where it had delivered heavy machinery such as bulldozers and trucks as well as humanitarian supplies.

The ship's captain, Cmdr. Larry Grippin, said 30 tons of relief supplies would be dropped off Friday near the eastern town of Ampara, one of the worst hit by the disaster.

The supplies will be transported by three helicopters to an area so badly devastated by the tsunami that it is unreachable except by air, said public affairs officer Ensign Nick Rogers. "All the roads are in bad

shape. The area around it has been cut off from regular contact," Rogers said. "This is something the government asked us to do because they don't have the capability to do that."

In eastern Sri Lanka, Tamils and Muslims are the major communities and the Tamil Tiger rebels have considerable influmajor clash between the mainstream rebel group and a breakaway faction in March and April last year.

The Tigers have made no comment on either the landing of U.S. soldiers or their movement to the east. But a rebel-backed Tamil politician has charged that the troops engaged in relief efforts might use the operation as a cover to spy on the rebels and give intelligence to the government.

"They may try to collect details to help the government crush the Tamil national struggle in a future conflict," Tamil rebel political leader Nallathamby Srikantha told Voice of Tigers radio.

U.S. envoy to work with EU on terror

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Washington will station a top emoyo in Brussels on a permanent basis to work with European Union officials in the fight against terrorism, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said Thursday, signaling a mending of ties after a stretch of trans-Atlantic tensions. Ridge said a senior U.S official will be in place at

the U.S. mission to the European Union by April 1.

"The United States shares an important partnership with the European Union," Ridge said during
a speech at a European think-tank.

Ridge's remarks were seen as part of warming relations ahead of a Feb. 22 visit to EU headquarters by President Bush.

Six Afghan soldiers kidnapped, killed

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Gunmen kidnapped six government soldiers in a former Taliban stronghold in southern Afghanistan and dumped their bullet-ridden bodies in a canal, a local official said Thursday. The six went missing on Wednesday during a pa-

trol in the Helmand province, 220 miles southwest of the capital, Kabul, said Mohammed Wali, a provincial government spokesman.

A government spokesman blamed Taliban guerrillas for the killings, but provided no evidence to support his assertion.

From The Associated Press



THE SUN/A

Thursday's front page of the British newspaper, The Sun, which shows Britain's Prince Harry with a cigarette and drink in hand, wearing a swastika armband at a party.

Royal scandal: Prince Harry dons swastika at costume party

BY ROBERT BARR

LONDON — Being the son of Princess Diana buys some sympathy, but not enough to get away with wearing a Nazi uniform.

So Prince Harry is learning, to immense royal embarrassment, after his party costume provoked outrage from Jewish groups and politicians.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center urged the wayward 20-year-old to go to Auschwitz to atone; the leader of the opposition Conservative Party demanded a public apology, and another lawmaker wanted Harry barred from the army.

"What Harry did was both stupid and evil," said Lord Janner, a senior figure in Britain's Jewish community. "The time has come for him to make a public apology."

Harry made his first apology Wednesday night, just as The Sun newspaper's first edition was hitting the streets with a big headline — HARRY THE NAZI — and a picture of the young royal wearing a swastika armband.

The picture was snapped by a guest at a fancy-dress birthday party on Saturday, and apparently sold to The Sun. Prince William reportedly was attired as a leopard and lion for the birthday party, which had a "native and colonial" theme.

"It was a poor choice of costume and I apologize," Harry said in a statement issued through the office of his father, Prince Charles.

In October, Harry got into a fist-fight with a photographer outside a nightclub. Before that, a former art teacher at Eton claimed she had helped Harry cheat on an exam—a charge rejected by a tribunal. And in 2002, Charles made Harry spend a day at a drug rehabilitation center after he was caught smokine marituana.

Iran warv of IAEA inspection of complex

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran - Iranian officials vowed careful watch for any attempted espionage by interna-tional inspectors who were to take environmental samples Thursday at a military complex the United States alleges may be involved in nuclear weapons re-

Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency, arrived in Iran on Wednesday for a visit to the huge Parchin military complex just outside the capital Tehran, according to state-run

Iran has said it will allow U.N. nuclear experts to take environ mental samples from landscaped areas outside the military complex's ammunition production workshops but that it won't allow them to inspect military equip-

The IAEA has been pressing Tehran for months to be allowed to inspect the complex, long used to research, develop and produce ammunition, missiles and high explosives

At IAEA headquarters in Vienna, agency spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said Thursday only that a visit would take pla confirm that a team of IAEA inspectors is today conducting an inspection at Parchin, including the taking of environmental sam-

In leaks to media last year, unidentified U.S. intelligence officials were quoted as saying a secured site at Parchin may be being used in research on high-explosive components for use in nuclear weapons. Iran repeatedly has denied allegations of a secret nuclear weapons programs, saving its nuclear activities are for peaceful energy purposes.

"Iran's red line for entry of IAEA inspectors into military sites, including Parchin, is to protect the secrets of the country's conventional military capabilities," top nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian was quoted in Thursday's government-owned daily "Iran" as saying.

"We are watchful. We have allowed [the IAEA] visit to our military sites, but we are watchful not to allow any espionage or intelligence theft from these sites," the newspaper also quoted him as telling top military officials. It did not say when he addressed them.

Mousavian and other Iranian nuclear officials could not be reached Thursday for comment about the inspection, which journalists were not allowed to attend.

Under international pressure, Iran suspended uranium enrichment and all related activities in November, hoping to avoid U.N. Security Council sanctions. The IAEA agreed to police the suspension of Iran's nuclear activities.



Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, left, and Palestinian Authority president-elect Mahmoud Abbas participate in a meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Thursday. Abbas said that he is ready to honor the security commitments in the "road map," a peace plan backed by the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations, adding that he hopes to resume peace talks with Israel soon.

Abbas says he'll address security commitments

BY MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said Thursday that he is ready to honor the security commitments in an internationally backed peace plan, adding that he hones to resume peace talks with Israel soon.

Meanwhile, a top Hamas leader held out the possibility of a cease-fire with Israel Sheik Hassan Yousef, the group's top official in the West Bank, also said Hamas does not seek to eliminate

Abbas, elected earlier this week, said Thursday he is eager to restart talks on the "road map, a peace plan backed by the United States, European Union, Rus-sia and the United Nations.

The plan, which envisions an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, has been stalled since it was launched in mid-2003 amid violations by both sides. The road map requires Israel to freeze settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza, while Palestinians must dismantle militant groups.

"We emphasize before you that we are committing to the road man " Ahhas said after a meeting with local and international Christian leaders

"As you know, this plan starts with security commitments and eventually deals with the final status issues, like borders and Jerusalem. We are ready to implement our commitments. We hope the Israeli side will do the same," he

Abbas did not specify what sort of security measures he is ready to take, but securing a cease-fire promise from Hamas would give him a boost. He has rejected Israeli calls to confront militants trying instead to co-opt them.

Abbas will have a difficult time moving forward without an agreement with the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

In public, the groups have re-

have signaled they are open to the idea if Abbas can guarantee their safety from Israel. Abbas also appears to have wide public support from a Palestinian public weary from more than four years of

Acknowledging the new political landscape, Yousef, the Hamas leader, said the group might re-consider its violent tactics.

though he said no decision has been made

fighting with Israel.

'We read the regional and the ernational reality and the international reality and the changes that have taken place based on this reality, and we take positions according to changes," he said Thursday.

"Hamas doesn't want to eliminate Israel. Hamas is a realistic political movement," he added. Abbas is to be sworn into office

on Saturday. He said that soon after he forms a new government, "there will be contacts with Israel that will start with calm and security, and then move to the other is-

Thatcher admits guilt

CAPE TOWN, South Africa -Sir Mark Thatcher pleaded guilty Thursday to unwittingly helping to finance a foiled coup plot in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea, accepting a \$506,000 fine and suspended jail sentence.
The plea deal allows Thatcher,

n of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to leave South Africa and to reioin his family in the United States

Mark Thatcher admitted in the Cape High Court that he paid to charter a helicopter, which mer-cenaries planned to use in their attempted takeover. But he maintains he believed it was to be used for humanitarian purposes, according to his lawyers and a person close to the family.

Only later did he begin to sus-pect the helicopter would be used for military purposes, according to a statement issued by George van Niekerk, a member of his legal team.

13 students die

TEHRAN, Iran, - Thirteen elementary school students died Thursday in a school fire that erupted after a malfunctioning heater ignited a nearby harrel of kerosene, a local official said

One teacher was in serious condition in a local hospital after the fire in Safilan village, some 435 miles south of Tehran, in Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari province

District Governor Ali Khani told state television said the dead included seven girls and six boys. He said the 13 students and the teacher were the only people in the school at the time of the fire.

Record airline fliers

FRANKFURT. Germany Frankfurt Airport, continental Europe's largest, enjoyed an unprec-edented number of fliers in 2004, with a 5.7 percent jump in traffic over 2003, its operator said Thurs-

The airport closed the year with 51.1 million passengers, set-ting a new annual passenger ting a new annual passenger record, said Fraport AG, its operating company.

Most of the growth was seen in

intercontinental flights, particularly connections to North America. the Middle East, and southern

It also achieved double-digit growth in freight tonnage, which was up 13.1 percent over 2003.

Black Hawk crashes

BOGOTA Colombia - A Black Hawk helicopter crashed Thursday during a counternarcotics mission in the jungles of south-west Colombia, killing all 20 soldiers aboard, the army said.

The helicopter, used in the S.-funded anti-drug effort U.S.-funded anti-drug effort called Plan Colombia, went down just after midnight near the town of Tumaco, 370 miles southwest of the capital.

Early investigations indicate the crash occurred due to "bad weather," according to the army statement

The Black Hawk that went down was part of an assault mission that included seven other aircraft, the statement said

Speaking on local radio, army chief Gen Reinaldo Castellanos said the area is crawling with Marxist guerrillas from the Revo-

lutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

From The Associated Press

Senate delegation to meet NATO on Iraq, Afghanistan

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium - A delegation of U.S. senators will meet with NATO's governing body Thursday for talks expected to focus on the alliance's missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The group, led by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, arrives in Brussels after a trip that has taken in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iraq and Sri Lanka. NATO has 100 soldiers in Iraq preparing a training mission for Iraqi officers. That is expected to increase to 300 as the operation gathers pace.

In Afghanistan, NATO has 8,000 peacekeepers in the north and in Kabul, the capital

The alliance is trying to muster troops to expand

the operation into the west of the country and send temporary reinforcements to help with parliamentary elections scheduled for April.

Alliance military experts also are drawing up plans to integrate the NATO peacekeeping mission with the separate, U.S.-led force of 18,000 which is fighting Taliban and al-Qaida remnants. Such a move is backed by the United States, but Germany and France have doubts.

Accompanying Frist are Majority Whip Mitch Mc-Connell, a Republican from Kentucky; Senator Norm Coleman, Republican from Minnesota; and Senator Mike DeWine, Republican from Ohio.

NATO officials said their meeting with ambassa dors from the 26 allied nations is part of a drive to strengthen their role in trans-Atlantic dialogue

Spanish voices lobby for jobs

Actors who dub 'The Simpsons' seek support in labor dispute

BY MORGAN LEE

MEXICO CITY — Marge Simpson is near tears, and the normally menacing Mr. Burns is full of warmth and gratitude.

The union actors who dub "The Simpsons" into Spanish are ask-ing their Mexican audience for help as they fight for their livelihoods in a labor dispute that could silence the original Spanish voices from the 15-year-old animated comedy.

"Marge is very sad," said Nancy Mackenzie, the voice of the Simpsons matriarch. "I don't believe they'll replace us. Something deep inside says no."

The disagreement between the actors union and a Mexican contracting company is in the hands of government labor arbitrators at a time when the actors say they normally would be sitting down to tape the upcoming season of "The Simpsons."

If an agreement isn't reached, the actors fear the company will hire new voices, changing the cartoon's Spanish alter egos — voices known throughout Latin Ameri-

At a news conference this week, Gabriel Chavez, the voice of dastardly power plant owner "Senor Burns," thanked fans who have objected to casting changes as the union negotiates its de-

"The only thing I can say is, 'Heck, don't stop coming around to the nuclear plant in Spring-field," Chavez said in his Mr. Burns voice, referring to the imaginary home town of the Simpsons family. "And I'm inviting you, I'm taking everybody out to drink at Moe's tawern. And it's free."

The Mexico's National Actors Association, a union founded in 1934 that now includes about 15,000 members, has accused a Mexican contractor of attempting



A labor dispute could change the voices of the Simpson family in Latin America. From left are Humberto Velez Voice of Homer Simpson in Spanish), Claudia Motta (Bart Simpson), Nancy Mackenzie (Marge Simpson), Paty Acevedo (Lisa Simpson) and Garbiel Chavez (Mr. Burns) at a Tuesday news conference in Mexico City.

to hire too many nonunion voices and breaking provisions of a collective bargaining agreement that dictates exclusive use of

The contractor, Grabaciones y Doblajes Internationales, maintains it has invited National Actors Association members and other actors to continue dubbing the cartoon series, but that the union is using strong-arm tactics to hold onto most parts.

The company argues it needs the new voices in order to com-

"With attitudes like these, our country has lost ground for dub-

s bing in Latin America," the com-

pany said in a news release.

"Much of this work today is done in Venezuela, Colombia and, more recently, in Argentina and Chile."

But Humberto Velez, the Spanish voice of Homer Simpson, said he makes only about \$55 per episode and feels compelled to stand up for the union that pays his ben-

"We're not people who like to fight," Velez said. "The only thing we know how to do is act. ... But we will never let people that aren't interested in agreements take away our rights for their own

Strawberry Fields set for closure

PAGE 9

The Associated Press

LONDON - Strawberry Fields

is not forever, after all.

The Liverpool children's home that inspired the Beatles' hit song is to close, officials said Wednes-

The psychedelic single "Strawberry Fields Forever" was released in February 1967 quickly made it to No. 2 in the British charts, but it was kept out of the top slot by Engelbert Humperdinck's "Release Me."

John Lennon wrote the song?s dreamy lyrics about a time in his childhood when he lived near the Strawberry Fields orphanage. It has been suggested that Lennon felt a kinship with the orphans after he was abandoned by his father and his mother, Julia, sent him to live with his Aunt Mimi, who raised him.

The Salvation Army, which now runs Strawberry Fields, said the current preference for placing children with foster families has reduced the need for orphanages. Only three youngsters remain at the home in Liverpool's Woolton district.

"We have to give two years' notice of closure, which we did yesterday, but there is no precise date for closure yet," said Marion Drew, divisional leader for the northwest region.

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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STARS STRIPES



IN THE STATES

Time cut for Martha?

NEW YORK — Martha Stewart's legal team is reportedly studying whether a Supreme Court ruling tossing out federal sentencing guidelines could shorten the length of her confinement.

The decision will affect people whose cases are pending, or defendants whose first appeals are

not yet completed — like Stewart.
The homemaking expert was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement after being convicted of lying about why she unloaded shares of ImClone Systems Inc. stock before the price plunged.

Bribery case guilty plea

PHILADELPHIA — A former J.P. Morgan vice president, Anthony C. Snell, pleaded guilty Thursday to arranging a \$50,000 payment to a close friend and adviser of Mayor John F. Street in an attempt to win favor with the administration.

Investigators accused Snell and his supervisor of submitting a false invoice to the company to make it appear as if Street confidant Ronald A. White had performed some legal work for J.P.

White died in November while

awaiting trial.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Snell could receive

up to a year in prison.
FBI agents learned of the alleged payment when they tapped White's phone and bugged his office during a lengthy investigation into the conduct of several municipal officials in Philadelphia.

Passport prints urged WASHINGTON The Heined

WASHINGTON — The United States should put the fingerprints of its citizens on passports to enhance global security, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said in a recommendation risking a privacy fight at home.

a Bridge said Wednesday passserts own deally include bionetric finger scans. For all 10 fingers — to help customs officials quickly and accurately idenity U.S. travelers. He offered no details on how the plan might deal with privacy concerns or guard against international identity theft.

"If we're going to ask the rest of the world to put fingerprints on their passports, we ought to put our fingerprints on our passports," Ridge said in a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies before heading overseas to talk about security ties with the European Union.

No-fly list to stand

SEATTLE — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the government's no-fly list of terror suspects barred from boarding airliners. U.S. District Judge Thomas S.

Zilly threw out the bulk of the case for lack of jurisdiction, saying that most claims brought by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of people with names identical or similar to those on the list must be taken directly to a federal appeals court.

He dismissed the rest of the case on the merits, saying the no-fly list had resulted in no "tangible harm" to the plaintiffs' lives.

From wire reports

Residents survey storm damage

BY KEN RITTER

The Associated Press

OVERTON, Nev. — Unwilling to wait any longer and ignoring warnings that more water might be on the way, residents in the West returned to homes damaged by storm-swollen creeks and riv-

"We've just got a big mess to clean up," said James Watkins, 50, as churning brown water receded around his Overton home.

As residents came, emergency responders began pulling out at dawn Thursday from this smal southern Nevada town, replaced by road crews and health officials looking at the safety of the water supply and sewer systems, and testing roads flooded when water crested Wednesday.

Heaviest flooding was concentrated here, in the area where Nevada, Arizona and Utah meet; 18 homes were destroyed or condemned in St. George, Utah.

North Dakota experienced blizzard or near-blizzard conditions, followed by a wind chill advisory for the state, with conditions that could feel as cold as 50 below

US Airways

approval

ALEXANDRIA, Va. -

bankruptcy judge overseeing the reorganization of US Air-

ways gave his approval Thursday to a deal in which the Air

Transportation Stabilization Board will provide the financ-

ing necessary for the airline to

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Stephen Mitchell gave his blessing to an extension

through June 30, giving the air carrier the breathing room it said it needs to emerge from

US Airways, a unit of US Airways Group Inc., extracted

more than \$800 million in annual concessions from its labor unions. Most unions reluctant-

ly agreed to accept pay and benefit cuts, but Mitchell last

week imposed an estimated

International Association

\$269 million in concessions on

of Machinists when that union

those savings to convince the

ATSB to extend the financing

agreement, announced Thursday. The current deal was to

expire Saturday, and the airline had warned it would likely

have to liquidate if it could not obtain an extension.

Despite the extensive labor concessions, US Airways still must find a new investor to pro-

vide hundreds of millions of

dollars for it to be able to

emerge from bankruptcy

US Airways said it needed

failed to reach a deal.

The extension con

continue operations.



A man in Santa Clara, Utah, speaks on his cell phone Wednesday at the end of a cul-de-sac, where a house stood until the night before.

zero.

Two people were killed and 13 injured in southern Arkansas' Union County late Wednesday or early Thursday by a violent storm that local officials said was apparently a tornado.

But the worst losses were at La

Conchita in California's Ventura County, where a mudslide Monday crushed 15 homes and killed 10 residents.

"We have seen the power of nature cause damage and despair, but we will match that power with our own resolve." California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Wednesday, surveying the devastation caused by the huge mudslide.

A hillside began eroding away from beneath a private road in the tony Mount Olympus area of the Hollywood Hills, and 13 people were evacuated as five homes were red-tagged as unsafe. Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn said Wednesday the city had sustained damage totaling about \$10 million.

At least 18 homes have been

lost or condemned because of record flood waters along the Santa Clara River in Utah. Some 100 families are reportedly displaced.

The Muddy River fanned out over ranches and farms, col-

over ranches and farms, collapsed riverbanks near downtown Overton and forced an estimated 200 people to flee. Officials warned that flooding remained possible overnight.

"We're expecting a surge," police Sgt. Michael Dailey said after night fell on a second day of on-again, off-again flood advisories. "But we believe the widened channel will be able to handle it"



LANSING (MICH.) STATE JOURN

Firefighters cut a van free from under a tractor trailer Wednesday on I-96 near Williamston, Mich. State police closed a 12-mile stretch of the highway in both directions following large, deadly pileups.

Deadly pileups in Mich., Indiana

BY DAVID EGGERT

The Associated Press

ALAIEDON TOWNSHIP, Mich. — At least two people died and 37 others were injured when about 200 vehicles crashed Wednesday in thick fog on a Michigan highway, police said.

One person also was killed in Indiana when at least 20 vehicles piled up amid heavy fog on a highway east of South Bend. Numerous others were injured.

In Michigan, a 14-year-old boy was killed when the sport utility vehicle he was riding in and about 10 other vehicles — including a tractor-trailer crashed on Interstate 96 outside Lansing. The boy's mother and grandmother were in critical condition,

Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth said.

The other fatal crash occurred about 30 minutes later when a man hit a semitrailer from behind, Wriggelsworth said. The victim was not immediately identified.

A total of 114 vehicles were involved in pileups in the eastbound lanes, while between 80 and 100 vehicles crashed in the westbound lanes, the sheriff's denartment said.

At least eighteen people were being treated Wednesday evening at a hospital in Lansing. State police closed a 12-mile stretch of the highway in both directions following the accidents.

The chain-reaction collision in Indiana left wrecked vehicles scattered Wednesday morning in both directions over a three-mile stretch of the Indiana Toll Road, state police Sgt. Rodger Popplewell said. Police closed a 43-mile stretch of the highway for more than six hours.

Popplewell said a man riding in a van was killed when the vehicle was caught between two tractor-trailers.

Two ambulances were also struck by semitrailers as paramedics treated injured drivers, Popplewell said. No emergency workers were hurt.

At least seven injured people were treated at hospitals in the Indiana crashes.

Bush inauguration may cost \$40 million

By JIM ABRAMS The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - It will take President Bush less than a minute to take the oath of office next Thursday, but before the inaugural events are over some \$40 million may have been spent on parades, parties and pyrotechnics.

And that doesn't include the costs of the most intense security operation in inaugural history.

The amount spent on this year's festivities will rival the \$40 million raised to celebrate Bush's first inauguration in 2001, and will exceed the \$33 million spent by President Clinton in 1993 when Democrats returned to the White House for the first time in 12 years

While the partying is being paid for privately, there have been some muttering about the scale of the celebrations at a time of war and natural disaster.

"Precedent suggests that inaugural festivities should be muted if not canceled — in wartime. Anthony Weiner, a Democratic congressman from New wrote Bush on Tuesday

Money for the celebratory activities is being raised by the Presi-dential Inaugural Committee, which as of the end of last week had received \$18 million, much in six-figure donations from wealthy supporters and corporate sponsors

Among the dozens of donors who've given at least \$250,000 do-

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nors are retailer Home Depot. Bank of America Corp., pharma ceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb and Ford Motor Co.

Kevin Sheridan, a spokesman said the the committee, fund-raisers were confident they would reach their goals. Sales of inaugural memorabilia, another source of revenue, have been even better than in 2001, he said.

The big donors are rewarded with a variety of inaugural packages, including meetings with no litical VIPs, tickets to the swearing-in ceremony and parade, and hard-to-get entry into the official inaugural balls and dinners.

The events begin Tuesday with a salute to the troops and a youth concert. On Wednesday there will be a celebration on the Ellipse park, including a fireworks show, and three candlelight dinners.

On Thursday afternoon, after Bush takes the oath of office at the Capitol, some 11,000 people will take part in a parade from the Canitol down Pennsylvania Avenue, to the White House. That night there will be nine official halls

D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams has estimated it will cost the district \$17.3 million to help pay for security at the first post-Sept. 11 inauguration, which includes 6,000 law officers and 2,500 milipersonnel to guard the 250,000 people at the swearing-in and the half-million expected to line the parade route.

Williams in a letter last month to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, said he can use \$5.4 million from a fund for special events in the capital, but the other \$11.9 million will have to come from the city's federal homeland security budget.

Inauguration day, with its street closings and heightened security, will also be a holiday for federal workers in the Washing-ton area. That, according to the Office of Personnel Management, costs taxpayers an estimated \$66



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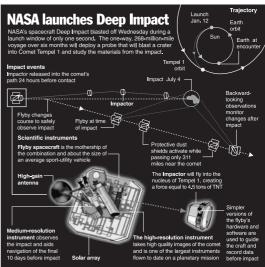
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NASA comet mission seeks blockbuster of a discovery

BY MARCIA DUNN The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. - NASA's Deep Impact spacecraft has begun its one-way trip to a fiery confrontation in space - a journey hopefully wor thy of its Hollywood name.

The craft blasted off Wednesday on a six-month mission to smash a hole in a comet and give scientists a glimpse of the frozen primordial ingredients of the solar system.

We are on our way," said Michael A'Hearn of the University of Maryland, the mission's chief scientist. Minutes later, the spacecraft shot out of Earth's orbit and onto its collision course

Scientists are counting on Deep Impact to carve out a crater in Comet Tempel 1 that could almost swallow the Roman Colosseum. It will be humans' first look into the heart of a comet, a celestial snow ball still containing the original building blocks of the sun and the planets.

The smashup is set for the Fourth of July. The flight was barely under way when an overheating problem was detected by the spacecraft itself. Onboard computer software put Deep Impact in a protective "sleep" mode that flight controllers expected to emerge from within 24 hours, via recov ery commands.
"We don't see it as a long-term threat by any

means," said project manager Richard Grammier.Deep Impact is carrying the most powerful tele-scope ever sent into deep space. It will remain with the mother ship when the copper-fortified impactor springs free the day before the comet strike, and will observe the event from a safe 300 miles away. NASA space telescopes like the Hubble will also

watch the collision

Nothing like this has ever been attempted before. Scientists stress that Deep Impact will barely alter the comet's orbital path around the sun and will not put either the comet or a chunk of it on a collision course with Earth.

In the 1998 movie "Deep Impact," astronauts try to blow up a comet in hopes of saving the Earth, but the comet winds up being split in two and one sec-tion slams into the Atlantic, creating a huge tsunami on the East Coast.

Hacker infiltrates Secret Service agent's computer ground hacker organizations. internal Secret Service memoran-

WASHINGTON - In the heat of a monthslong hacker investigainto an extraordinary break-in at a leading wireless car-rier's network, an Internet informant approached the Secret Service with startling news: The targeted hackers were reading some of the agency's own e-mails and computer files.

The trove of illicit government data included a "highly sensitive"

dum and part of a mutual assistance legal treaty from Russia, according to court records. A hunted hacker turned his sights on his pursuers, targeting at one point the desktop computer of a Secret

"Operation Fire-

which targeted under-

Service agent on his trail. The break-in targeted the network of Bellevue, Wash.-based T-Mobile USA. It was discovered during a broader Secret Service

investigation,

But in a twist, one of the govern-

ment's investigators was also a T-Mobile customer and sometimes used the wireless network to communicate about the case.

Nicolas Lee Jacobsen, 21, of Santa Ana, Calif., a computer engineer, has been charged with the T-Mobile break-in in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. Investigators said they traced the hacker's activities to a hotel near Buffalo, N.Y., where Jacobsen was staving.

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Printed in Italy by Editrice Telestampa

Stars and Stripes (USPS 017252) is published daily (except Christma and New Year's) for 50 cents daily and \$1 Sunday by the Stars and Stripe central office, 259 14th St. NW, Saite 350, Weshington DC 20045-1301. Per odicals postage goal of Weshington, DC. Postmaster, so and address change to European Stars and Stripes, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211.

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Anti-hunting logic flawed

Economics, violence of killing an animal "accidental-shooting injuries," and civilized behavior were the subject of "Hunting is not best approach" (Jan. 7). Unfortunately, the letter writer's philosophy is flawed.

I grew up in the cattle industry of Oklaho ma. Many of my youthful days were spent on the kill floors of a slaughterhouse. My most vivid memory is of an incident when I was about 15 years old. They use electrod to electrocute hogs. Generally, this does not kill the hog, so he screamed as he was lowered into the vat of hot water to scald the hair off before gutting him out.

Cattle are killed in a similarly humane way. A large sledgehammerlike device is used to hit them on the forehead. Generally it does not kill them, but when the beef is hung by its back legs and allowed to bleed out, it will die. The beef is then skinned and gutted

Living in the cattle industry can also be a hard and painful lesson. It is hard to look at a carcass with "Choice" stamped on it. I spent countless hours training, feeding, grooming, showing, and just plain loving that steer. The lesson learned is that life is not fair, and it is cruel even to the things you care for the most.

They are called slaughterhouses for a reason. Killing is a messy business. To humane ly kill an animal using drugs or other chemicals would contaminate the meat. To kill and not consume the remains of an animal

is a sin where I come from. Wildlife is managed by the "sport" of hunting. However, there are still a lot of people who depend on hunting and fishing to provide food.

There are more accidental shootings as the result of having handguns in the home than result from hunting. The incident in Wisconsin was not accidental, but rather an act of homicide

1st Lt. Teri Scroggins Camp Taji, Iraq

Bonuses needed, equal out

In response to "Angry over re-up bonus-es" (letter, Jan. 7): The bonuses are offered for several reasons, whether it be specific job qualifications, shortages in regard to staffing positions or to maintain a particular

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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One position that needs to be recognized is the fact that for most, the Army Reserve or National Guard is not a career for those who serve. Their careers are in the civilian sector. For some Reserve and Guard soldiers, serving has presented an economic difference between civilian and military life

The retirement system for Reserve and Guard soldiers differs vastly from that in the regular Army. I suppose one could find an argument here, since Reserve and National Guard soldiers receive the "meat" of their retirement from the civilian sector. However, when they are deployed on active status, that portion is ignored, leaving the civilian retirement nonbeneficial and unable

So, in my opinion, it all equals out in regard to how bonuses are received. Sgt. Michael Cruse

Camp Montieth, Kosovo

You're right, you're wrong In this ever-changing world, where it has

been proven over and over that usually both sides are correct with the truth lying somewhere in the middle, why can we not agree on this statement: Evolution is part of the intelligent design.

Science and religion are the same thing.

both have the ultimate goal of answering this question: Why are we here? Science deals with exactness, quantifiable observations that can calculate, to ever-increasing precision, the formulae of the "grand design." Religion deals with the abstract, what

cannot be calculated but rather can be felt. I've often equated the two as such: Sci-ence is your recording of music on a compact disc; a digital reproduction of the original. Sure, you lose out on some of the ambiance, like static or tone, but it is the more-precise representation of the main idea. Religion is like an old record or magnetic tape - an analog recording that captures everything but you lose out on the fine I am well-schooled in the sciences and it

sickens me to see such obvious ignorance on the part of those who choose to refuse what is right in front of their face. However, at heart I am a musician, and I know there are some things in this world that come from a more "mystic" source. So, get a grip, people. You are all incor-

rect, yet everyone is right; and if you do not understand that, perhaps by intelligent design you have been chosen to be left behind on the evolutionary ladder. Patrick F Harlow

Baumholder, Germany

Stripes was always there

Stars and Stripes was introduced to me during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. I really did not think much about it then

It pursued me to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1996 and I developed a great friendship with Stripes. During my assignment to En-gland and later to Okinawa, I never missed any days without having Stripes at the dinner table

Now, in Iraq, I would rather have my Stars and Stripes than an evening meal! Following an alarm red, through muddy puddles, freezing cold, smoky nights, I would walk to the dining facility to get my Stars and Stripes.

Thank you for giving me smiles and chuckles; tears and sadness; hope and vision; and, best of all, keeping me in touch with the world - all for free. Thanks for all Stripes does for us.

Air Force Col. Sarla Saujani Balad Air Base, Iraa

U.N. can't slide away from Iraq oil deal

New York Daily News

here's no flaming red flags in this stuff," Paul Volcker assured The New York Times the other day as he prepared to release dozens of the United Na tions' internal audits of its Iraqi oil-for-food operation. Permit us to quibble.

Even this very early, once-over-lightly re port from investigator Volcker makes it plain that the \$60 billion-plus oil-for-food program was run by inattentives and dou-ble-checked by practically nobody. It may

be true, as Volcker has suggested, that Saddam Hussein's regime did not skim any-where near the \$21.3 billion that has been tossed around on Capitol Hill, but it's apparent that the program was quite the gravy train for quite some time and that there wasn't much in the way of oversight.

Ouoting Volcker's own "Briefing Paper" from the "Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme": "The audit reports describe inadequate procedures, policy, planning, controls and coordination across numerous areas of activity. Some reports ... present a

wholesale failure of normal management and controls? "The lack of focus ... appear(s) to have de-

prived the U.N. of a potentially powerful agent in helping to ensure accountability. Perhaps by "no flaming red flags," Volck-

er meant merely that the "Briefing Paper" names no particular names and is unlikely to get anybody indicted at this time. Otherwise, it certainly presents a scathing picture of managerial slovenliness - to the degree, we submit, that it will not be unreasonable for donors to wish to watch where all these tsunami-relief dollars might be going.

Doonesbury







BY GARRY TRUDEAU



STARS AND STRIPES WEB SITE: WWW.STRIPES.COM

OPINION/OMBUDSMAN

Both sides are

sending signals

that their

people have had

enough.

Abbas, Sharon have support, need a plan

n a region where so much has gone so wrong for so long, it is difficult to be more than cautiously optimistic about the prospects for peace and stability in the Middle East. But the latest developments do augur well.

There is opportunity at hand. If the ha tred and mistrust spawned by recent history can be overcome, leadership appears willing to forge a new future that will include an independent Palestinian state sharing the Holy Land with Israel.
President Bush has

said he expects this to happen by the end of his second term. That will require the United States to be a forceful and scrupulously honest broker between the two sides Beyond ending the violence that keeps so much

of the world away from cherished religious and historic sites, a renewed involvement in a Mideast peace process offers the United States a chance to improve its international image.

In an election that appeared largely trouble-free, Palestinians on Sunday chose Mahmoud Abbas as their new leader, replacing Yasser Arafat, who died in November. Abbas ran an almost dichotomous campaign, embracing terrorists as heroes while calling for an end to violence against Israel.

At the core, he seems to be a pragmatist, recognizing that a four-year campaign of terror against Israel has done the Palestinians far more harm than good. His wide margin of victory represents an endorsement of that view by the Palestinian people, but Abbas will have to be diligent about keeping seething terrorist elements in line

Leaders of Hamas insist they will not try to undermine Abbas, but they have not agreed

to abandon terrorism. Meantime, the Israeli Parliament on Monday approved Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's new government, restoring the majority he needs to proceed with Israel's an-

nounced pullout of military forces from the Gaza Strip, further enhancing the prospect for productive peace talks.

Both sides are sending signals that their people have had enough. The next question is where are they willing to go from here?

The path is obvious, but in the Middle East, that has rarely been the one taken



Campaign affected, but didn't dominate, letters page

his is a follow-up column on Stripes' coverage of the 2004 political campaign in the States (the first one, "On balance, Stripes had suc-

cessful campaign," appeared in the Dec. 9 edition). It deals with **Ombudsman** letters to the editor on

politics during the last four months of the campaign hundred

eighty-two letters were charted. One hundred twenty-six of them percent) dealt with the campaign. Letters on the presidential

candidates and politi cal philosophy totaled 96 of the 126. The re-30 maining cam. paign-related letters were about media issues. The breakdown of the 96 letters dealing with candidates and the race was: pro-President Bush — 44 (45.8 percent);

pro-Sen. John Kerry — 30 (31.3 percent); pro-conservative positions but didn't name Bush 6 (6.2 percent); pro-liberal positions but didn't name Kerry — 5 (5.2 percent); neutral — 11 (11.5 percent). The tone, as was true of letters in the U.S.

newspapers that I read, was strident on both sides in most of the letters.

A pro-Bush letter: "Having made his only qualification to be president of the United States a four-month tour in Vietnam, 'wai hero' John Kerry is being confronted with his own accounts of his service record."

A pro-Kerry letter: "Republican re-elec-tion committees, and their associates, are known for the nastiness of their campaigns against Democratic opponents. Their recent, and incredible, attack on John Kerry's Vietnam combat record reveals the depth of their nastiness and has taken the Republican Party to an all-time low.

A moderate perspective was reflected in the neutral letters. A soldier in Baghdad wrote: "I generally like to read your letters to the editor page; it is generally filled with make people feel better. ... But all too often it is filled with negative things, such as pass ing the blame for America's problems, problems with representatives, or problems in society in general. ... The harsh reality is that re members of the greatest nation in the world and the only reason that we are that nation is because the people stood together in whatever endeavor it faced. We fought to have the freedom that we have

good things and supportive things, which

A sergeant in Baghdad wrote: "[As I read Stripes] I note the strong agreement or disagreement with a wide range of topics. I would just ask all of us to think about how fortunate we are able to voice our disagreement in an open forum."

In the heat of such a close and sharply partisan campaign, it was not surprising for the media to be part of the crossfire. A letter complaining about too much of Fox News Channel on American Forces Network drew two supporting letters and five letters defending AFN. There was not any substance to the original complaint that I could find.

Stripes, The Associated Press and Garry Trudeau's "Doonesbury" cartoon strip (which appears on the letters page) also

One officer in Iraq based his complaint on stripes being a "leftist rag" because it published only two pictures of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's visit to coalition troons in Baghdad.

that it had shifted to the left

The ombudsman also was criticized. After the June 28 ombudsman column "Discovering whether Stripes stories cover all bases a reader in Germany wrote: "Please, oh, please — spare us 'a series of columns on five topics' from Stars and Stripes' ombuds-

drew complaints and supporters. Overall

there were 15 critical letters and 11 positive

letters. The complaint against Stripes was

man - the one I've characterized as the anologist for Stars and Stripes. He has lately 'discovered' whether Stars and Stripes stories 'cover all bases.' As you might expect, he discovers that Stars and Stripes does 'cover all bases.' Not that I disagree with him. I just figure he doesn't know what he's talking

However, it is reassuring to see that Stripes readers continue to write on a wide range of topics and are candid in their views. The subjects included:

■ A letter calling for Rumsfeld to resign

and a follow-up letter defending him: ■ Nearly a dozen letters on whether the

use of prostitutes by military personnel should be prohibited;

Gasoline prices and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (the number of letters on this topic is down since my last review, but there is still great interest in that

A debate over which NFL games AFN should televise

It was good news to see not a single letter about mail problems. It also was pleasing to see a large number of letters from Iraq. Of the 282 letters charted, 117 (41 percent) were from military personnel serving in Iraq. On politics, 11 of the 44 pro-Bush letwere from Iraq: three of the 30 pro-Kerry letters were from Iraq.

My conclusion: Stripes continues to carry out its mission of providing through the letter pages a great forum for the military community overseas.

Send comments to Joe Ungaro at: Ombudsman, Stars and Stripes, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20045-1301. Phone civilian +1(401) 364-6032; fax +1(401) 364-8696; or e-mail:

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY "AND FOX HAS, ONCE AGAIN, ASSURED HE USUAL BOWL HALFTIME VIEWERS AND SHOW WILL ADVERTISERS, TALENTÉD CONTAIN 1/O BAPELY CLOTHED PERFORMERS

Study: Texas plant has worst mercury pollution on continent

The Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A North Texas power plant is North America's worst mercury polluter, according to an international study criticized by the utility that operates the facility.

The study conducted by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation listed TXU Power's Monticello coal-fired plant in Mount Pleasant as logged 2002 emissions at more than twice the levels of any plant in Mexico and

The commission created to address regional environmental concerns as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement said four other Texas power plants rank among the 20 worst in mercury emissions. The plants include two others operated by TXU.

Environmentalists say mercury moving from these power plants exposes Dallas-Fort Worth area residents to the toxic metal that has been linked to brain damage and developmental that has been linked to brain damage and developmental that has been linked to brain damage and developmental that has been linked to brain damage and developmental that has been linked to brain damage.

tal disorders.

Dallas-based TXU Corp. said the study failed to note that the Monticello plant no longer uses mercury-rich lignite coal, switching to a cleaner fuel that has re-

duced its mercury emissions. "Everyone is searching for a

solution on how to reduce mercury," company spokesman Rand LaVonn said. "TXU is in the fore-front."

Study co-author Paul Miller said the analyses of emissions from more than 1,000 coal-fired power plants in Canada, Mexico and the United States do not include recent installations of pollution controls.

"But the essential point remains the same: Texas power plants are high mercury emitters." he said.

The Bush administration is working to finalize new regulations it promises will cut mercury emissions by 70 percent within 15 room.

Drug maker seeks OTC status for its cholesterol blocker

By Laura Meckler
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government is considering whether a drug for a serious chronic condition — high cholesterol — should sit on drugstore shelves alongside medicines for headaches, allergies and athlete's foot.

Supporters say making a low-dose cholesterol medicine available without a doctor's prescription would help get needed treatment to millions of Americans who are at risk of heart disease.

"There's a huge treatment agap," said Jerry Hansen, vice president of marketing at Johnson Merck Consumer Pharmaceuticals Co., a joint venture that is asking the Food and Drug Administration for permission to sell a low-dose version of Mevacor over the

The drug, he notes, has been on the market for a long time and has proven quite safe.

But opponents say selling directly to the consumer allows patients to skip doctor visits, where they might be told to change their diet and exercise — both crucial in the effort to lower cholesterol.

"This is going to encourage people to take medication rather than alter other parts of their lifestyle," said Dr. Michael Schloss, clinical co-director of the Cholesterol Treatment and Research Center at New York University. A panel of FDA scientific advis-

ers was considering the request Thursday and Friday. The FDA usually follows the recommendations of its advisers.

The drug is only meant for a slice of the population: men 45 and older and women 55 and older whose LDL—low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol—count is between 130 and 170. They should also have at least one risk factor for heart disease, such family history of heart disease, such family history of heart disease or an HDL—lipid-density lipoprotein, or "good" cholesterol—count of less than 40.

Certain patients, such as pregnant women, should not use Meva-

Mevacor was the first of the statin drugs, which lower cholesterol by limiting the buildup of artery-clogging fat deposits, reducing the risk of heart attack by about a third. As a group, statins made some \$14 billion in the United States alone last year.

Makers of Mevacorsay the company will encourage patients to get their cholesterol checked after they begin treatment, though critics say there's no guarantee patients will do it. The company does not want the FDA to require tests of liver function, despite concerns that the drug can cause inflammation of the liver.

Officials have said they would charge about \$1 for each daily 20-milligram pill if the over-the-counter sales are approved.

That's less than Merck charges for the prescription version, but consumers who have health insurance would have to pay the whole thing, rather than just a co-payment.

Mass. researchers link gene to common form of deafness

BY PAUL RECER The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Researchers have identified a gene that prevents the regeneration of inner ear cells that are critical to hearing, a discovery experts say is the first step toward finding a way to correct the most common form of deafness among the elder-

In laboratory mouse studies at Massachusetts General Hospital, researchers found that by eliminating the effects of a single gene they could cause inner ear cells vital to hearing to regrow. The regrowth replaces nerve endings, called hair cells, that are often lost to injury or age.

"Most deafness is caused by the loss of these hair cells," said Zheng-Yi Chen, leader of the hospital research team. "Now we have the means to regenerate these cells."

The goal, said Chen, is to learn to find a way to turn off this gene in the inner ear of humans, probably with a drug, and allow the regrowth of hair cells. "That would lead to recovery of hearing," said Chen. He is senior author of the study appearing this week in the journal Science.

Dr. James F. Battey, director of the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, one of the National Institutes of Health, said the discovery by Chen's team "is a very important first step toward learning" how to restore hearing in human patients.

The hair cells are a key link in the signal chain that makes hearing possible. The cells line the cochlea, part of the inner ear that sends the sensation of sound to the brain.

Sonic vibrations from the eardrum and bones of the middle ear are relayed to the cochlea where they excite the hair cells. This energy is converted to electrical signals that are carried by nerves to the brain and interpreted as sound. Humans are born with about 50,000 inner ear hair

cells, but the cells decline over time due to injury, disease or age. Once enough of the cells die, then the hearing begins to fade because the cells do not naturally regenerate, said Stefan Heller, a hearing researcher at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirma-

In the study, the research team surveyed all the genes that are active during the embryonic development of the inner ear. The researchers discovered that a protein made by the retinoblastoma, or Rbi, gene halted the growth of hair cells. In effect, they found that the RbI protein was a molecular switch that turned off hair cell proliferation.

Power restored to remote Alaskan village under deep freeze

BY MARY PEMBERTON
The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Electricity was restored to most homes in an Arctic village

tricity was restored to most homes in an Arctic village Wednesday, four days after the community lost power in a fierce blizzard and was thrown into a deep freeze.

An Alaska Air National Guard

helicopter reached Kaktovik on Tuesday, bringing two technicians who were able to restore power to about three-quarters of the village of 300 people more than 200 miles above the Arctic Circle.

On Wednesday, two National

On wednesday, two National Guard planes dropped off generators, heaters, food, water and other supplies, such as diapers and infant formula. The planes also brought plumbers, mechanics, medical workers and more electrical linemen.

The planes had previously been prevented from landing by snow drifts on the runway. A third flight carrying propane and other hazardous materials was due in Wednesday night.

A blizzard packing near hurricane-force winds knocked out power to the village Sunday and plunged temperatures to 20 degrees below zero. Officials believe the outage may have been caused by power lines slapping together and arcing during the storm.

Schoolteacher Adam Hausman was staying with five other people in a house that still had no power Wednesday. It was about 30 degrees inside the home, which was being warmed a little with a gas stove, he said.

"We just have been kind of cuddled up in two rooms," he said.

"It has been too cold [for school]. Your hands, you can't even turn the pages."

Many residents sought shelter at the village school until it lost power. About 100 people moved to the village's equipment maintenance building, which had a generator.



Residents of Kaktovik, Alaska, unload emergency supplies Wednesday from an Alaska National Guard C-130 aircraft amid high snow drafts. Electricity was restored to most homes in the Arctic village four days after a bitzard packing near hurricane-force winds knocked out power and plunged temperatures to 20 below zero.

Α



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PAGE 16 · Stars and Strip

AG issues warning

MA BOSTON — Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly has warned nursing home owners and managers that they may be violating workers' civil rights by imposing English-only policies that ban them from speaking their native languages, even on breaks.

Nursing homes in recent years have relied on immigrants, many of them Haitian, to take difficult jobs, including bathing and feeding elderly residents and push-

ing their wheelchairs. But some say workplace discrimination is on the rise as well.

Advocates say nursing homes impose English-only policies that apply even to meal breaks and pri-

vate telephone conversations.
Reilly issued an advisory opinion to owners warning them that
these policies may violate workers'
civil rights and open them to legal
action.

Officials from Reilly's office and the Massachusetts Extended Care Federation have scheduled a seminar for nursing home operators on how to prevent discrimination in the workplace.

Haitian immigrants make up as much as 80 percent of nursing assistants, advocates say.

Bus driver arrested

TN CLARKSVILLE — A school bus driver has been arrested on charges of sexually assulting two of his foster children in Maine more than three years

Roger J. Guimond, 57, of Clarksville faces five counts of sexual assault of a juvenile and seven counts of unlawful sexual contact with a juvenile in cases dating to 2001. He was arrested at his home, said Deputy Danny Shelton of the U.S. Marshal's Service office in Nashville.

He was taken to the Montgomery County Jail and awaits extradition to Maine

Guimond moved to Clarksville from Augusta about two years ago, the Marshal's Service said. He was arrested after marshals received a tip from the Maine State Police that he was living in the town located about 50 miles northwest of Nashville.

Guimond was hired as a substitute bus driver for Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools in March 2003, and moved to full-time status in May 2003. He also worked as a bus driver in Maine.

Guimond was placed on unpaid leave by the school system.

He has no known criminal history, and Guimond's personnel file shows he has never been disciplined and no complaints have been filed against him.

2 skiers rescued

GRAND JUNCTION —
Rescue crews found a
woman and her daughter alive two
days after they failed to return
from cross-country skiing, but the
woman's husband was still missing

Debra Walker and 18-year-old Camille were found at about 8 a.m., Mesa County sheriff's spokeswoman Susan McBurney said. She did not have details on their condi-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

tion, but said they did not require medical evacuation from Grand Mesa in western Colorado.

She said there was no word on Dan Walker.

The three skiers had been reported missing a day after they set out.
Up to 8 feet of snow had fallen
on the top of 10,500-foot-high
Grand Mesa and temperatures
have been in the 20s, the National
Weather Service said

States sign agreement

AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry has signed a concealed handgum reciprocity agreement with Colorado. Texas now has agreements with I of states to allow citizens with concealed handgum permits to legally carry those weapons. The others are Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

School forums planned

WA SEATTLE — The school board is holding seven forums to establish criteria for closing schools. The district needs to close buildings because of a budget gap and declining enrollment.

Elementary schools are at 80 percent capacity and middle schools at 70 percent

Kraft's curbs food ads

NORTHFIELD — Kraft Foods plans to curb advertis-



Run in the sun
A runner moves along the Pacific
Coast Highway in Malibu, Calif.

ing of Oreos, regular Kool-Aid and other popular snack foods to children younger than 12 as part of an effort to encourage better eating habits.

The company, the nation's biggest food manufacturer, also said it would begin labeling some healthier products with a flag touting their benefits

The new marketing program comes as food companies are facing rising criticism from some consumer groups and others that they are contributing to obesity in children.

Two years ago, Kraft had already moved to reduce the fat content in 200 products, cap portions for single-serve packaged snacks and quit marketing snacks at

As part of the new marketing program, a "Sensible Solution" label would appear on products high in nutrients such as fiber or calcium or those with low fat, sugar or sodium.

60 days for noose

FL CLEARWATER — A man accused of draping a noose around the shoulders of a black teen at a fast food restaurant was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

The judge also sentenced Louis Giannola IV, who was convicted in December of misdemeanor battery, to 10 months probation and community service. He was spared a harsher sentence because jurors declined to label the incident a hate crime.

In a brief statement read in court, the 20-year-old Giannola apologized to the victim and said he now understands the hurt he caused. Giannola also asked Dionte Hall and his family for forgive-

Giannola was arrested after he draped a noses around the neck of Hall, 15, while they and other teens were at a Wendy's restaurant in Largo in January 2004. Prosecutors contend some people Giannola was with were heard making racial sturs.

Giannola said he did not put the noose around Hall's neck out of hate but because another teen, whose own father is black, bet him \$10 he wouldn't do it.

Dead tiger causes stir

CA SACRAMENTO — The first 911 caller reported a 400-pound animal on the north-bound lane of Highway 99. Another reported a lion.

Then a tiger.

"We got there and confirmed it was in fact a tiger," said California Highway Patrol Sgt. John Mason, who added that it had a very long tail and very big paws.

Mason said a veterinarian told him the animal had been euthanized and was being taken to the University of California-Davis for an autopsy.

The veterinarian was driving behind an associate who drove a pickup truck that swerved to avoid another car. The maneuver ejected the tiger from the truck.

Mason said the tiger's veterinarian was affiliated with PAWS, or Performing Animal Welfare Society, which cares for abandoned or abused exotic animals. Mason said a tow truck hoisted the 400-pound tiger off the freeway.



About to get a face full of snow Julia Galloway, 10, bottom, and her sister, Carly, 8, wrestle in the snow at Shiawassee River Walk Park in Fenton. Mich.



Icy grip A clothes line in north Champaign County near West Liberty, Ohio, holds only ice. An icy winter storm snapped trees and power lines and steady rain pushed rivers beyond their banks in other parts of the state.



Talking mule? Slider Middle School students Krysta Molina, center, and Karina Brasgalla, far right, watch a mule as they wait for the departure of a wagon train from the Socorro Mission in Socorro, Texas. The mules are part of an effort to rush adventurer William P. Huff's trip from Houston to near Fresno, Calif.



Dueling Elvises Simon Luxton, an Elvis Presley performer from Wellingborough, England, stares into the eyes of the "Elvis at 13" statue while visiting the Elvis Presley Birthplace in Tupelo, Miss., with other British tourists.



Whoa, can't stop ary lagoon in Green Bay, Wis.

A black mallard duck slides in for a landing on the ice in the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctu-



Up on the roof Oscar Vasquez, of Safeside Chimnev Contractors, works on a "roof up" rebuild of a chimney at a residence on Cedar Street in Norwich.



From left, dancers Haley Argo, 3, of Ashaway, R.I.; Danielle Christina, 4, of Pawca-Tiny dancers tuck, Conn.; Julia Thornton, 4, of Westerly, R.I.; Caelan Holdredge, 3, of Westerly, R.I.; and Lindsey Maresca, 4, of Westerly, R.I., work on their tap steps during a preschool ballet and tap dance class in Westerly, R.I.

Charged with murder

MA LANESBORO — A 20-year-old man was arrested on charges of murdering his stenfather in the first homicide in this Berkshire County town in nearly 25 years, authorities said.

Christopher Robinson was ordered held on \$1 million bail nending his arraignment in Central Berkshire District Court in the killing of Neil E. Olsen, 48, of Lanesboro, said Berkshire District Attornev David Capeless.

Capeless said a preliminary autopsy report showed Olsen died of multiple gunshot wounds and blows to his head.

His body was found on the floor of a horse stall in the barn at his Main Street home, Capeless said. The Berkshire Eagle reported that Olsen had a sign and truck paint-

ing business in the barn. Authorities did not comment on a possible motive.

2 arrested in shooting

MS MERIDIAN — Two people were arrested in a fatal shooting at a hospital that may have been related to an earlier murder-suicide attempt, police

One of the suspects was arrested at Rush Foundation Hospital and the other turned himself in to police, Meridian Police Chief Benny Dubose said. Both were expected to be charged.

The man fatally shot at the hospital was the son of a man who Dubose said shot himself and a woman at a Meridian home in an apparent murder-suicide attempt. Dubose said one of the suspects is the woman's son.

The man and woman found at the home did not suffer life-threatening injuries. The fatal shooting victim's name was not immediately released by authorities.

Teacher suspended

MI DEARBORN — A middle school teacher has been suspended with pay while officials investigate a report he told his students that Bedouin Arabs used the Ouran as toilet paper.

The teacher is on the faculty of Woodworth Middle School in Dearborn, a Detroit suburb of 100,000. About 30,000 Dearborn residents are Arab-American.

Bedouins are members of histori-cally nomadic tribes and make up about 10 percent of the population of the Middle East. The Ouran is the Muslim holy book.

Parents complained to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Imad Hamad, Michigan director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said the teacher should anologize

Cuts to health program

NASHVILLE — More than 320,000 adults will be cut from TennCare under cost-saving plans proposed by Gov. Phil Bredesen, a move advocates called a "Draconian" reaction to the expanded Medicaid program's spiraling price tag.

Bredesen tried to put the best light on the cuts, saying he found a way to keep all children covered while preventing TennCare from bankrupting the state.

His plan calls for eliminating

323,000 adults from a program that covers roughly 1.4 million people - while retaining coverage for all 612,000 children on the program. There also will be reductions in benefits and a plan to move back to managed care organizations - as long as they accept part of the financial risk.

Many other states have been watching what happens TennCare, once hailed as a model in state-federal partnership for solving the country's health insur-

Metro cracks down

MINNEAPOLIS — Metro Transit police say they're increasing efforts to catch riders who don't nurchase tickets for the Hiawatha light-rail line, which relies partly on the honor system to collect fares. The fine for fare evasion is \$140, plus about \$40 in court costs. Stations have no entry turnstiles, and transit police perform random checks for tickets and nasses

Cow washes in with tide

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The highest tide of the year brought an unusual visitor to Ocean Beach — a dead cow.

While it is not unusual for dead sea animals such as sea lions and whales to wash up on the beach, this was the first time anyone could remember that a cow ended up on the coast of San Francisco.

The all-black animal is bigger than a calf and smaller than a dairy cow. It was reported to the National Park Police by a visitor. Where the animal came from or how it got in the ocean is a mys-

"We've never had a dead cow on the beach before," said National Park Service spokesman Rich

Builders replicating boat

ME ROCKPORT — Boat builders are replicating one of the three ships that carried settlers to Virginia in 1607 to establish the first permanent English settlement in the New World. Rockport Marine is building the 88-foot Godspeed for the Jamestown Settlement's living history museum. The \$2.2 million ship is expected to be completed next year.

Plans for merger

CA LOS ANGELES — Voters may decide whether to merge the Los Angeles International Airport police with the city police. A City Council committee voted unanimously to support a ballot measure to remove a City Charter provision requiring an independent airport police force. The recommendation goes to the full council later this month

Bargaining rescinded

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov.
Mitch Daniels rescinded executive orders that established collective bargaining and allowed union settlements for about 25,000 state workers, saying they were cumbersome and would hinder his plans to reorganize state government. The move drew criticism from The Unity Team, a union that represents more than 14,000 state employees.

Stories and photos from wire services

A true 'Blue' star

On ABC's long-running police drama, Dennis Franz prepares to turn in badge

by where [police]

officers don't come

on the set, swapping

stories, taking

pictures, giving us

attabous, When

we film in

New York, theu're

with us 24-7.77

Andy Sipowicz on "NYPD Blue"

Dennis Franz

BY DEBRA LEITHAUSER The Washington Post

welve seasons ago Detec-

tive Andy Sipowicz came on the scene, and, oh, what a charmer he was. Balding and full-bellied, NYP-D's finest was crass, crude and

There wasn't much to love but viewers managed to find it and kept tuning in for more of "NYPD Blue," the ABC drama that's gar-

20 Emmys dur-ends this sea-

Behind Sipowicz's volatile facade is Dennis Franz. 60, no newcomer to the cop beat. previously teamed with "NYPD Blue" creator Steven Bochco for anoth law-enforcement show, "Hill Street Blues.

where he played not one but two officers in the precinct. After an unsuccessful spinoff

 "Beverly Hills Buntz" and some other missteps, Franz earned a shield with staving power on "Blue." Franz isn't sure what awaits

him once he turns in his hadge he's thinking more acting, some

traveling with wife Joanie and lots of relaxing. "I'm good at doing nothing," he quipped. But he's ready for the show to end, and he's proud of what he called a "phenomenal run."

O. You've been through four partners on the show. Who has heen your favorite?

A. You're never gonna get that out of me! But from Sipowicz, well, he had a real fondness for John Kelly, which was David Caruso's character

> Q. Sipowicz is believable in part because of all the little details viewers have become familiar with such as wearing short sleeves with ties, or putting cologne in his armpits. What are quirks that you love? Well, I

like his insistence, how he's thinking he's right about little things. Like,

for one example, his pronunciation of the word "prostate." He was certain it was "prostrate." Even when John Irvin tries to correct him, Andy insists he's right. Irvin even leaves a dictionary open to the correct spelling on his desk, and Andy gets upset and still insists it's wrong.

O. And where do you get inspi-



Dennis Franz is retiring the role of Andy Sipowicz on ABC's "NYPD Blue" after 12 seasons. Franz says Sipowicz is the 28th cop role he's played.

ration for those quirks?

A. It began from our writer and creator, David Milch. ... He was my role model for Andy, so on a personal level I got a lot of inspira-tion from him. I began to realize that he was ridding himself of a lot of demons through Andy Sipowicz. I also looked to Bill Clark, our executive producer, who used to be a police officer. Between the two of them, I came up with a lot of Andy

Q. With actress Charlotte Ross off the show, your personal life with on-screen wife Connie is less visible. Is that disappoint-

A. It's a big disappointment. It

really came as a surprise.... We spent so much time getting the audience to accept this oddball rela tionship. We worked very hard at that, and I think we won a large portion of the audience over.

O. Where will this season take Sipowicz? Will we see more trage-

A. I doubt that very seriously. I think Steven and I and the writers do not want to see Sinowicz go out on the slab. We want to end on an upbeat note for him as far as what's ahead Q. How much did your two pre-

vious roles on "Hill Street Blues" help you create the mannerisms of Sipowicz?

A. Not only those two helped. but Andy Sipowicz is cop No. 28 for me. So all 27 in the past have created those layers.

Q. Terry Wrong, who produced "NYPD 24/7," said the officers he interviewed for that documentary [narrated by Franz] all loved Sipowicz. Wrong said several of those officers have met you when visiting Los Angeles. Do vou spend a lot of time with actual police officers around the country?

A. Hardly a week goes by where officers don't come on the set, swapping stories, taking pictures, giving us attaboys. When we film in New York, they're with

At the reception, milkshakes

Rapper Nas and R&B songstress Kelis were married Saturday during an intimate

The musical couple had been dating for two years. They were married in an Atlan-ta church and their reception was held in the city's upscale Buckhead neighborhood. publicist Tony Ferguson said Tuesday.

"Definitely, if you were there, you were a friend or family member," Ferguson said. "They really wanted to keep it out of the press. They wanted to make that day for just them."

Nas' brother, Jungle, was best man. His father, jazz musician Olu Dara, also attend-

Kelis, 25, is best known for her chart-topping single "Milkshake. Nas, 31, snared the hip-hop world's atten-

tion with his 1994 debut album, "Illmatic." He has since released several albums and has appeared in the movies "Belly" and "Ticker."

Help for Haitian youth

Dozens of Haitian youths mobbed hip-hop star Wyclef Jean as he visited a slum to inaugurate a program to support education in his impoverished native coun-

The vouths on Tuesday watched the former Fugees rapper perform an impromptu rendition of his new song "Gonaives" atop a truck in a occer field in Cite Soleil, a seaside slum outside the capital of Port-au-Prince. They ran after him as he hopped on a small bicy cle and rode around the



Jean was visiting the L'Athletique d'Haiti Sports Academy, an after-school program in Cite Soleil that provides tutoring and sports training for 650 youths.

He inaugurated an initiative to provide scholarships to help new participants stay in school, a requirement for the afterschool program.

Free schools are rare in Haiti, and many families cannot afford tuition.

"What Sammy Sosa has done for the Dominican Republic, that's what I think I can do for Haiti." Jean said, referring to the Dominican-born baseball star who founded a charity for health in education in his coun-

Judge rules for Kid Rock

A federal appeals court agreed that trademark and copyright infringement claims brought against singer Kid Rock should be dismissed.

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati upheld Tuesday a lower court ruling that Kid Rock's former business associates waited too long to file a lawsuit.

The Detroit rap-rocker, whose real name is Robert Ritchie, first sued Alvin

Williams and Earl Blunt of ER-Bran Productions Inc. in May 2001. He said a 1989 contract that gave

EB-Bran sole ownership of the Top Dog trademark and established a partnership with Kid Rock was a fraud. Williams and Blunt countersued.

U.S. District Judge Nancy Edmunds dis-missed the countersuit in February 2003, saying that even if EB-Bran did acquire ownership of the trademark in 1989, the company abandoned its interest by not using the trademark for at least a de-



The appeals court agreed, noting that Kid Rock wrote a letter to Williams and Blunt in December 1990 stating that he didn't intend to work with them on his songs.

Stories and photos from wire services

YOUR MONEY

Dynamic stability control helps keep cars from losing control

Click and Clack

My husband and I recently moved from Connecticut to Colorado, and are considering buying a new

We have a 2000 BMW 528i, which I have loved. but because we are now in a place with a lot more snow and in a county with a lot of dirt and gravel roads, it doesn't really fit our needs anymore. Neither of us wants a sport utility vehicle, but we have been considering the Subaru Outback Wagon. My

question: The vehicle dynamics control is only available on the most expensive model. Is that system worth the extra cost?

My husband is suspicious of any system that claims to take over for the driver probably because when he was younger, he raced cars, and he likes to feel as if he always has control - but I will be the main driver of the car, and I'm a normal driver. Is it worth it? Thanks so much -Dee

TOM: The short answer is yes. It IS worth it. More and more studies are showing that dynamic stability control (often referred to by a confusing array of acronyms like VDC, DSC, ESP, MSPCA, etc.) does do a lot to help people avoid accidents.

RAY: Dynamic stability control is one of the new est electronic forms of skid control. These systems work by using sensors to detect signs of a skid, and then limiting acceleration and applying the brakes on individual wheels to regain control of the car.

TOM: Why do you want to prevent a skid? Well once you're skidding - once the tires are no longer in full contact with the road — it's very hard to control the car. You're much more likely to plow into something, be it another car, a tree or a mango-smoothie stand by the side of the road.

RAY: These days, the three major anti-skid systems are: ABS, or antilock-brake systems, which help you avoid skidding when you're making an

Dow Jones Industrials Dow Jones Transportation

259.08 6,211.33 1,150.74 Dow Jones Utilities NYSE Composite Amex Index

1,750.82 1,060.72 548.29 Nasdaq Composite S&P 500 S&P MidCap

515.90 10.268.52 Russell 2001 DI Wilshire

NYSE

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

Vol (00) Last Chg

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.40 1.00 .92 .80 70.33 55.80 53.15 37.25 52.75 61.19 22.39 71.63

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General Dynamic General Electric

+.16

-.12 IShRs200 +.33 DJIA Dian IShJapan -6.12 DHB Ind: +.28 OilSvHT -.17 SP Fnd +.10 SP Engy -.15 ISh UK

YTD DIV PE Last Chg %Chg

51.94 +1.12 53.79 +30 56.92 +.17 101.48 +33 35.68 +28

39.52 57.69 34.98

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

327.13 7,075.64

2,092.53

613.19 11,657.67

Last Chg

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Fidelity Invest: GroIn Fidelity Invest: GroCo

Heddley invest: Exposed and American Am

udder Funds S: Income S rrill Lynch I: USGvtAffe

118.57 31.43 122.10 105.99 10.83 15.51 84.41 29.93 35.90 17.56

AMEX

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

+.3 -4.6 -3.9 -3.0 -2.2

+.7 -6.6 -1.2 -4.0 +.5 -2.2 -4.1 +6.5 +.1 -9.1 -2.9

+.98 +1.33 +.70 +.40 +.71 +.90 +.19 +.02 +1.40 +1.78

Name Vol (00)

-2.33 -2.41

-3.81 -2.00

-5.89 -2.62

23.16 38.58 6.27 26.78 18.93 16.53 17.01 13.48 2.81

Chg.

+.15 -1.3 -3.1

+.33 +.11 +.05 +.25 +.38 +2.91 +.28 +.05

-23 -20 -19 -10 -42 -27

-3.0 -2.2 -1.9 -1.8 -1.5 -2.1 -2.0 -1.2 -2.2 -3.1 -5.8

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MOST ACTIVE (\$1 or

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

28.82 42.02 19.02 16.04 32.73 22.22 11.13

34.32 29.87 27.70

21.51 8.32 12.70 12.51 26.40 43.21 14.91 13.00 10.21

NASDAQ

Name Vol (00) Last Chg

+16.4

+5.06 +8.20

helps you avoid skids while you accelerate; and DSC (or whatever each manufacturer happens to call its version of dynamic stability control), which helps you avoid skids while you're moving and turning. DSC helps prevent you from losing control of the car when you take a corner too fast or swerve to avoid something. And it works.

TOM: So, if it's available — and sadly, Subaru only makes it available on the top-of-the-line Out-

back — we'd recommend it. RAY: Your husband — like most guys who take his position — is wrong. Sure, we all want to be "in control." But the fact is

that microcomputers can handle certain tasks better than even the most skilled driver ever could. The computer that controls these systems can pulse an individual wheel's brake 10 or 15 times per second A human driver could never do that.

TOM: Of course, most cars with stability control have a switch that allows you to turn it off. So, if your husband is determined to have control, he can turn off the system, make some high-speed swerves and crash your new car into a chicken coop to prove our point

RAY: But dynamic stability control is something we DO recommend, when it's available, And we hope it will be available on more cars and SUVs as time goes by (Ford just announced that it's putting it on all its SUVs in 2005, and Chevy is putting it on its full-size SHVs and vans)

TOM: By the way, Dee, the Subaru Outback is a very nice car. But since you love your BMW, you might also consider the BMW 325xi. It's smaller than your current 528i, but it comes with all-wheel-drive and dynamic stability control.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk section of cars.com on the World Wide Web. Distributed by King Features Syndicate Inc.

EXCHANGE RATES
Military rates
Euro costs\$1.3504
British pound\$1.93
British pound \$1.93 Japanese yen (Jan. 14)
Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar)
British pound \$1.8914
Denmark (Krone) 5.30
Denmark (Krone) 5.330 Egypt (Pound) 5.9549 Euro \$1.3271/.7535 Hong Kong (Dollar) 7.7936 Hungary (Forint) 186.03
Euro\$1.3271/0.7535
Hong Kong (Dollar)7.7936
Hungary (Forint)186.03
Israel (Shekel)4.3668
Japan (Yen)102.35
Kuwait (Dinar)
Norway (Krone) 5.84 Philippines (Peso) 55.83
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)3.58
Singapore (Dollar)1.6327
South Korea (Won)1.041.80
Switzerland (Franc)1.10
Thailand (Baht)39.00
Turkey (New Lira)1.3555
(Military exchange rates are those
available to customers at military bank-
ing facilities in the country of issuance
for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the
Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germa-

Iceland (Krona)61.52
Israel (Shekel)
Japan (Yen)102.35
Kuwait (Dinar)
Norway (Krone)5.84
Philippines (Peso)55.83
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)3.58
Singapore (Dollar)1.6327
South Korea (Won)1,041.80
Switzerland (Franc)1.10
Thailand (Baht)39.00
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(Military exchange rates are those
available to customers at military bank-
ing facilities in the country of issuance
for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the
Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
For nonlocal currency exchange rates
(i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germa-
ny), check with your local military bank-
ing facility. Commercial rates are inter-
bank rates provided for reference when
buying currency. All figures are foreign
currencies to one dollar, except for the
British pound, which is represented in
dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is
dollars-to-euro.)

PRECIOUS METALS

INTEREST RATES

Workers thankful for jobs, not war

By DAVID STREITEELD

Los Angeles Times

OPP, Ala. - Euna DuBose works in a factory sewing cam-ouflage trousers for Marines. As the grandmother of three sol-diers, this gives her some uneasy moments.

An extra-small pair of pants will make her think, this fel-low's just a baby. She'll wonder Will he get home safe? And what about her son's sons — one in Afghanistan, one awaiting orders in Mississippi, one just home from Mosul but perhaps destined to return to Iraq? Du-Bose never had thoughts like this with her last job, when she made Levi's

"I'd rather be doing jeans," the 70-year-old said. "No emo tions were involved." She doesn't have much choice

The last jeans factory here failed two years ago. But the Ma-

rine-uniform plant is thriving. The war in Iraq is giving a boost to Opp and many other communities. Over the past two vears, military spending has become a pillar of the economy for the first time since President Reagan ordered the Cold War buildup of the mid-1980s.

Defense spending accounted for 11 percent of the third quarter's economic growth, double the rate of two years ago, according to government figures reased recently.
That number underestimates

the effect of the war, analysts say, because it doesn't account for military contractors upping orders of equipment and raw material from their own suppliers, creating a wide ripple.

Companies in Evansville, Ind., Union City, Calif., Mullins, and McAllen, Texas, have just been awarded contracts to taling \$91 million to make soldiers' Meals, Ready-to-Eat. Companies in Mount Gilead and Waynesville, N.C., Belleville, Ill., and Atlanta won contracts worth a combined \$70 million to make hot-weather boots. In San Ramon, Calif., ChevronTexaco Corp. received a \$108 million contract for jet fuel.

All of these contracts were awarded by the Defense Logis-tics Agency, an arm of the De-fense Department that buys apparel, fuel, medicine, construc-tion material and repair parts. For the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, the agency bought \$28 bil-lion worth of materiel and services, up 12 percent from the previous year.

No one is tracking what the spending is doing to employment, but the effect might be considerable. Sopakco Inc., the South Carolina company mak-ing MREs, publicized a \$35 million contract extension two ars ago as creating 250 jobs

Opp needs any stimulus it can get. Its heyday was 20 years ago, when this region near the Florida border was thick with apparel plants.

The quest for cheaper labor drove all those factories to Mexi-co, the Caribbean and Central America. That caused a downturn that left Opp's downtown with 14 empty stores along its two-block width. Even the Mc-Donald's recently closed.

Yet if the war is providing Opp with a rare jolt of economic adrenalin, the reason for the work prompts ambivalence.
"If it weren't for the war,

wouldn't have a job. But that doesn't mean it's good that there's a war," said Patricia Walker, who outlines the flies on 600 pairs of trousers a day. "It makes my head spin." Walk-er's daughter, Salena, is stationed with the National Guard

ents and Sensibility Money tip of the day

Charity deadline extended

CBS MarketWatch

just passed a law enabling you to donate money for tsunami victims through Jan. 31 and still get a break on your 2004 taxes.

The donations must be made in cash, and they must benefit tsunami victims. The extended deadline doesn't apply to other good intentions, such as charitable gifts to your alma mater, a check to your church or a bag of winter clothes for a local shelter.

Before you donate, make sure you're giving to a reputable organization. Scams tend to spring up after a disaster. Check out the charity at Charity Navigator, a nonprofit organization that evaluates and ranks charitable organizations. The Web site (www.charitynavigator.com) offers a list of its top-ranked charities providing tsunami aid.

Your total tax-deductible charitable donations, including cash and noncash items, are limited to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. Deductions are valid only for gifts to a recognized charity, meaning it has IRS approval to register as a tax-exempt organization.

When you donate, remember to get a receipt from the charity for tax purposes.



Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy with isolated morning rainshowers. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s. Saturday lows in the mid 30s to mid 40s in Spain, lower 50s in Portugal.

SUN & MOON



TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Tel Aviv

68/51

Kuwait City

31 Ct 444 Ct 44 Ct 45 Ct 60 55 56 59 2 47 1 64 37 52 0 4 20 8 21 32 35 65 73 24 7 1 66 4 48 55 51 8 1 25 7 39 50

55/33

80/57

52/27

Washir Washir

THE UNITED STATES TODAY

72/47

88/67





Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.



Horoscope

The influence of Capricom planets can be transforming — not in a caterpillar-turned-butterfly way but

more in a rebellious-youth-turned-soldier way. There's boot camp involved. Capricom is a tough-love energy for certain, but it works brilliantly to push people, situations and projects to the next level. Your hard work is changing you.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 14), You take your life in a new directions this year, and you have more control than ever over one of them. It's liberating to know you can steer yourself with such precision — an achievement in the next seven weeks proves this bettue. Solo endeavors in February make you appreciate partners even more. A Libra or Capricom could steel your heat.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Some activities that should fall under

the category of success don't make you feel successful. Consider that success may mean something different to you than it does to others. Enjoying your creativity is key.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It seems safer to be floating in outer space than to get mixed up in certain relationship turmoil. But don't be fooled. Outer space has its dangers, too, what with the black suns, neutron storms, radiation and the like. Come back to Earth.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll take an action that has no other purpose but to make someon

other purpose but to make someone crazy. And to you, this falls under the category of "fun." That's the beautiful thing about you — you're a provocateur. Never change.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll learn enough about your fellow man to be glad for your own

fellow man to be glad for your own good fortunes — and your misfortunes, actually. Your complaints about life are so much more appealing and interesting than anyone else's.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Once again, there's proof that intellect is wasted if one isn't also people smart. A concept explored in the first season of "The Apprentice" applies: There's little correlation between a high IQ and success in lemonade

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're ready to go it alone. Then.

Holiday Mathis

Mathis

LIBRA (Sept.

23-Oct. 23). Though it may seem strategic to play the freshman, eager for his upperclassman's counsel, this doesn't serve your long-term purpose. You already

know more than you think you know. Trust that, and dive into your project.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Your status in the game isn't determined by a solitary winning move or a single losing move. Taking steps forward and backward is to be expected. Cheer yourself on no matter what, and others will follow suit

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You define your goals and

targets, but then, when you get going, it doesn't feel like work. It feels like you're just being really silly That's how you know you're on the right path.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan.

19). Whether negative or positive, you put your attention on things for a reason. Regarding your arch nemesis. It's obvious to the rest of the world that you really care for this person, but you may still be too stubborn to admit it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're so over being heavy and

serious. Doting on someone who doesn't particularly deserve it — take your pampered pet, for instance — puts you in a lighthearted, frivolous and exceptionally attractive mood.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You actually add hours to your life when you put a seal on one of your time drains. Perhaps stop watching

when you put a seal on one or your time drains. Perhaps stop watching a certain TV show, stop talking to a long-winded person or stop going into that store where the lines are so long.

Creators Syndicate

Bailey

Beetle I

or Worse

Peanuts



















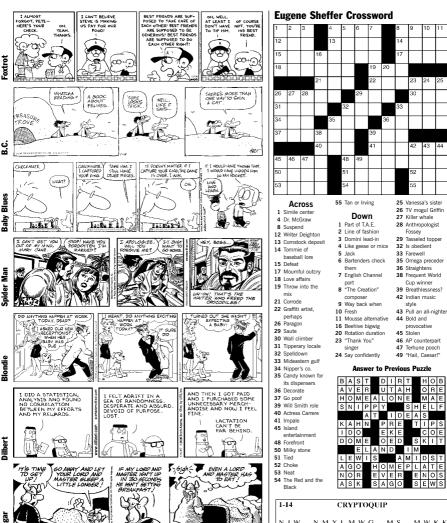
TIME WITH MY DAUGHTER ISN'T SPENT ELIZABETH.

IT'S INVESTED.





PAGE 22 · STARS AND STRIPES · MIDEAST EDITION · Friday, January 14, 2005



ELLEN, WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE MY FEELINGS FOR YOU...

SO LET ME EXPRESS THEM WITH MUSIC INSTEAD

DAVES

ANNA-ONE,

ANNA BYE-BYE ELLEN

KWEM



XTSBM X PSSNW. TBM MJWP

JXPUHPU

J W L

BECAUSE THE Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MATTRESS ON HER GUEST BED IS SO FIRM, IT CREATES LOTS OF HARD FEELINGS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals H

Man's new lifestyle not wife's fault

Dear Abby: I am ashamed to admit this, but after 20 years of marriage, my husband told me that he was meant to have a woman's body. My self-confi-dence is destroyed. Our children are suffering in every aspect of their lives. I cannot grasp my husband's revelation, as I Dear Abby love him still.

I also accept that this is something I cannot change, but ever since we separated, the men I have dated have all

turned out to be gay.
Is it me? Am I cursed? - Devastated in Detroit Dear Devastated: This has nothing to do with you, and there are no curses involved. Your husband was born the wrong gender, and it's nobody's

Counseling can help you come

to grips with this issue Since your husband is considering gender reassignment, it follows that he is seeing a therapist.

You need help, too.

therapist to refer you to a psy-chologist or psychiatrist.

Dear Abby: I am in college, and four out of five of my roommates smoke. About two-thirds of my friends are smokers, too They all know it's bad for them.

but it is hard to quit. I see cigarette packs and lighters lying around and I am ver tempted to start smoking. I don't know why, because I know it's unhealthy. I have never smoked but I'm afraid that I'll start. How can

I make the right move? Nail-Biting in Rochester, N.Y. Dear Nail-Biting

Making "the right decision" will be easier if you remove yourself from temptation. Request a change of living quarters to accommodations that are strictly nonsmoking, because research has proven that secondhand smoke can make you sick.

Dear Abby: I am 16 and the

mother of a beautiful little boy His father is no longer in the

There is a man in my life who loves my son and me very much. I'll call him Joe. Joe and I have been together for eight incredible months and he recently proposed to me.

One week later, I caught him cheating. Joe told me how sorry he was and begged me to give him another chance. I agreed.

But, Abby, things don't seem the same anymore. It feels like I'm the only one trying in this relationship. Was I wrong to give him a second chance?

- Confused in Reno, Nev. Dear Confused: Yes. A man who is sincerely in love, and mature enough for marriage and fatherhood, does not cheat a week after he proposes. You are only 16. It's time to step back

and consider how you plan to Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at

raise vour son.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

one letter to each square. to form four ordinary words UROCC

SBELS

ARIVED

SNULES

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

WHEN THE RETIREE RETURNED TO COLLEGE, HE WAS

PLACED IN THE-

I'm getting my degree this year, Forty years

(Answers tomorrow) CUBIC AMOEBA CHROME What the barber did on vacation -Answer "COMBED" THE BEACH

http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby Universal Press Syndicate I recommend that you ask his **「oo sensitive to fiancee's quip**

Dear Annie: My fiancee, "Catherine," has told me that I am overly sensitive. As you might expect, I disagree with

her, so I am asking you. Catherine is friends with "John and Geraldine," whose company I do not particularly care to keep. This couple was married two years ago -immediately after John divorced his first wife. Prior to pursuing Geraldine however. John expressed a

strong interest in Catherine. This doesn't surprise me, as Catherine is a very attractive woman What bothers me is that over

dinner one recent evening, Catherine lamented about having not married John herself, so that she could have traveled with him to Hawaii, Cancun, etc., as John and Geraldine have done since their wedding.

Am I being overly sensitive to object to Catherine's continued relationship with John?

— Dazed and Confused Dear Dazed: Sorry to tell you,



over-sensitive on this issue. Catherine is not carrying a torch for John. She is carrying one for Hawaii. She envies the traveling that John and his wife have been able to at ford. We will say, however, that she expressed it rather insensitively, considering that you take these things to heart.

Tell her, gently, that it hurts when she makes it sound as if she would rather be engaged to John instead of you. Then let her make it up to you.

Dear Annie: Our office staff often hosts meetings for small groups in our conference room This past week, we were the hosts for a meeting, and a young woman who was attending offered to bring refreshments for the participants. We were very grateful to her, as we usually

provide only coffee and water The young woman in question brought cookies, and after the

meeting, she took the remaining cookies with her. Is this appropriate behavior, or should she have left the cookies for the hosts Some of our staff has likened this to bringing a bottle of wine to a dinner party and asking that the unused portion be returned to

Another group feels she is entitled to the leftover cookies since she brought them. What do

: -- Wondering in Wyoming Dear Wondering: This was not a social event, like a dinner party. She was bringing the cookies for the participants. Although it would have been nice for her to share the extra calories with your office staff, she no doubt assumed she had to clean up after the meeting and took the cookies with her. No faux pas intended.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, Iongtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox/ecomcast.net or write to: Annie's Mailbox, comcast.net or write to: Annie's Mailbox, Coreators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd, Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate



"If you think this is loud, wait till you hear him when I take him OUT of the tub!"











SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—Golf: Sony Open, first round (did).
AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m.—College basket-AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m.—College basket-AFN-Sports, 2:30 p.m.—College basketball: UCLA af AFN-Sports, 7:30 p.m.—College basketball: Oregon St. at Washington St. (did).

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.—Golf: Sony Open, secnd round. AFN-Pacific, 2 a.m.—NBA: Orlando at De-AFN-Atlantic, 2 a.m.—NBA: Dallas at San Antonio. AFN-Sports, 4:30 a.m.—NBA: Minnesota at Denver. AFN-Radio, 4:30 a.m.—NBA: Miami at L.A. Clippers, AFN-Sports, 1:30 p.m.—NBA: Minnesota at

APN-Apports, 130 p.m.—Nax: Minnesota APN-Atlantic, 7 p.m.—College basketball: APN-Padfari, 7 p.m.—College basketball: APN-Padfari, 7 p.m.—College basketball: North Carolina at Wake Forest: APN-Sports, 730 p.m.—College basketball: APN-Sports, 730 p.m.—College basketball: APN-Atlantic, Padfic and Radio, 10:30 p.m.—NIT: APC Divisional playoff game, N.Y. Jest at Pittistory.

All times are Central European Time; dld in-dicated delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Visit www.myafn.net for more information.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25 fared

Wednesday

1. Illinois (17-0) beat Penn State 90-54.
Next: at Northwestern, Saturday.
2. Kansas (12-0) beat lowa State 71-66.
Next: at Colorado, Saturday.
3. North Carolina (14-1) beat No. 8 Georgia Tech 91-95. Next: at No. 4 Wake Forest, Satur-

3. North Carolina (14-1) beet No. 5 Georgia Cherch 2-00, Not. 1 No. 4 Wase Forest, Satur-Carolina (14-1) did not play, Nest. 3. Wase Forest (14-1) did not play, Nest. 5. Duke (11-0) did not play, Nest. 2 Not. 5. Duke (11-0) did not play, Nest. 2 Not. 9. Not. 1 Not. 1

"15. Michigan State (10-2) did not play, wet at Wisconsin, Sunday, Potent Wisconsin, Sunday, Next vs. Loyola Marymount, Thursday, 17. Artzona (12-3) did not play, Next vs. 18. Cincinnati (14-1) beat East Carolina No. 18 Cincinnati, Saturday, No. 18 Cincinnati, Saturday, No. 18 Cincinnati, Saturday, 19. Pittsburgh (11-2) did not play, Next vs. 21. George Washington (11-2) beat 51. Carolina 21. George Washington (11-2) beat 22. George Washington (11-2) beat 23. George Washington (11-2) beat 24. Saturday, Saturday, Saturday, Saturday, 24. Saturday, Saturday, 25. Saturday, 26. Saturday, 27. Saturday, 28. Saturday, 28. Saturday, 29. Next vs. Massachusetts, 29. Saturday, 29. Satu

Bollisting to 65-39. Next: v.S. massacriusetts, 22. Marquette (13-1) did not play. Next: at Memphis, Thursday. 23. Alabama (13-3) did not play. Next: vs. No. 11 Mississippi State, Tuesday. No. 11 Mississippi State, Tuesday. Polymorphisms (13-1) did not play. Next: vs. Min-resota, Saturday. 25. Oklahoma (12-2) did not play. Next: at Baylor, Saturday.

Wednesday's men's scores

EAST Albany, N.Y. 68, Binghamton 62 Allegheny 92, Hiram 91 American U. 66, Navy 60 Arcadia 68, Chestnut Hill 63 Baruch 80, York, N.Y. 74 Baruch R. Voric, N.V., 74

Sprookly R. J. on May 18

COVY TO, Medgar Evers 41

COVY TO, Medgar Evers 41

COVY TO, Medgar Evers 41

Collifornia, P. T., Silipery Rock 62

Carnopil-Sellion Bar, Veraling on a Jeff. 79

Delaware Valley TT, Dreve 61

D Finding, Pa. Se, Bridger, Se, Sell, 1007, Hawen 59 Killing, Pa. 70, Lycoming 58 Lebanon Valley & J. Moravian 66 Lebanon Valley & J. Moravian 68 Montclair S. 77, College of N. L. 56 Montclair S. 77, College of N. L. 56 Mortclair S. 77, College of N. L. 56 Mor

Rochester 77, Geneseo St. 60 Rochester Tech 84, Roberts Wesleyan 74 Rowan 81, Richard Stockton 49 Saint Joseph's 59, Massachusetts 52 Shippensburg 61, Clarlon 57 St. John Fisher 76, Keuka 45 Steven S Tech 80, N.Y. Maritime 75 Temple 77, Fordham 45 Memout 76, Stock 19 Back 75 Memout 76, Stock 19 Back 75 Memout 76, Stock 19 Back 75 Memout 76, Stock 19 Back 75

Sevent Fort 88, N.Y. Martinen 75
Vermont 78, Story Rock 59
West Chester 98, Millersville 66
West Chester 98, 20
We Mart Mill 27, Indication on the Mart Mill 27, Indication on the Mart Mill 27, Indication on the Mart Mill 27, Indication of the M

Adrian 122, Tri-State 116 Akron 75, Buffalo 59 Alblon 68, Hope 44 Augsburg 76, Concordia, Moor. 73 Augustana, III. 80, North Park 58 Benedictine, III. 79, Clarke 72 Blackburn 61, Webster 58 Bowling Green 79, E. Michigan 63 Calvin 89, Kalamazoo 56 Bowling Creen 79. E. Michigana G. Calvin Bi, Kalansabos 50. Cardinal Strick Bi, Juddon G. Cardinal Strick Bi, Bidana Tech 87. Cornestone IBS, Indiana Tech 87. Cornestone IBS, Indiana Tech 87. Cornestone IBS, Illustra 18. Dominical III. El. Leura a 55. Cornestone IBS, Illustra 18. Leura 18. Cornestone IBS, Illustra 18. Leura 18. Cornestiva IBS, Illustra 18. Leura 18. Cornestiva IBS, Illustra 18. Leura 18 North Certral 82, Wheaton, III. 62 Onlo Weslyn 82, Oberlin 88 65 Pittsbury 51. 84, Emporia St. 69 Principia 81, Mac Murray 79 Principia 81, Mac Murray 79 St. Mary 82, Francis, III. 65 Rockford 78, Concordia, III. 63 Francis, III. 65 St. Mary 8, Minn. 83, Hamilin 72 Texas Tech 78, Kangas St. 76 1704 (1974) Principia Minn. 63 Texas Tech 78, Kangas St. 65 Toledo 77, Ball St. 67
Wilchigan TS, Kent St. 60
Washburn 86, NW Missouri St. 82
Wichita St. 88, Bradley 73
Wis. Lutheran 83, Lakeland 89
Wis. - Alliander 65, Youngstown St. 42
Wis. - Platterille 70, Wis. - La Crosse 62
Woster 92, Kenyon 49
Xavier 73, Duquesne 52
SOUTHWEST

Texas A&M 74, Texas 63 Texas St. 72, Nicholls St. 58 FAR WEST Nebraska 68, Colorado 61 UTEP 83, Nevada 80, OT Westmont 94, Vanguard 72 TANK MCNAMARA

AP Women's Top 25 fared

Wednesday

1. Duke (15-1) did not play. Next: at Virginia, Fridav. ia, Friday.

2. Baylor (12-2) lost to Nebraska 103-99 in 3OT. Next: vs. Oklahoma, Sunday.

3. LSU (14-1) did not play. Next: at Florida,

This day, see your hand and play. Next: vs. the day see (11-2) did not play. Next: vs. seorgetown, Thursday, so the this close of this close of the this close of this close of this close of the this close of the this close of the this close of th

6. Scamford (13-2) flori flori play, Next Vs. Gar-ffornia, Thursdy (13-3) lost to No. 15 Connect-leut (7-50. Next vs. No. 20 Purdue, Sunday, 8. Tennessee (10-3) did not play, Next vs. Arkansas, Thursday, 9. Michigan State (13-2) did not play, Next vs. Wisconsin, Thursday, 9. North Carolina (12-2) did not play, Next at North Carolina (State, Friday, 11. Mannesota (13-2) did not play, Next: at 11. Mannesota (13-2) did not play, Next: at

an Tell Minescott (127) did nof play, Next: at 10, 20 Purder, Thursday, No. 12 Purder, Thursday, No. 12 Purder, 12 Pursa (8-5) lest S. Saturday, 13 Texas Tech (127) beat No. 12 Texas 7-64. Next: at Colorado, Saturday, 13 Manyland (1172) did not play, Next: at Manyland (1172) did not play, Next: at 16. Connecticut (9-4) beat No. 7 Notre Dame 67-30 Next: tut, 94). Planova, Saturday, 14 Next: at 16. Connecticut (9-4) beat No. 7 Notre Dame 67-30 Next: tut, 94). Planova, Saturday, 14 Neburn, Thursday, 20 did not play, Next: at Auburn, Thursday, 20 did not play, Next: at 112 Next: 20 did not play,

17. vanderbilt (12-2) did not play. Next: at Auburn, Thursday. 18. Georgia (13-4) did not play. Next: at Kentucky, Thursday. 19. UCLA (10-4) did not play. Next: vs. Arizo-na State, Friday.

18. UCA (U-4) on not pay, Next: vs. Artze-20. Purdue (U-4) dig not play, Next: vs. No. 11 Minnesota, Thursday, 12. Deptaul (1.3) did not play, Next: at No. 5 olio State, Thursday, 22. Deptaul (1.3) did not play, Next: vs. Vs. Nebraska, Saturday, vs. Nebraska, Saturday, vs. Nebraska, Saturday, Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday, Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday, 25. Virginia Tech (11.3) did not play, Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday, 25. Virginia Tech (11.3) did not play, Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday, 25. Virginia Tech (11.3) did not play, Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday,

Wednesday's women's scores

Wednesday's Wollieli's SC EAST Allegheny 68, Oberlin 59 Alvernia 62, Cabrini 69, 20T Baruch 76, York, N.Y. 48 Bethany, W.Y. 48 Bethany, W.Y. 47 Bioghamton 57, Albany, N.Y. 47 Biostan College 77, Villanova 63 Brooklyn 53, binh 1ay 40 Both 19, 100 Bethal 19, 100 Buichell of Cologanics of COV St. Media (1975). Cov. COV 59, Media (1975). Cov. St. St. Stepen (1975). Collifornia Pa. 57, Stipper (1976). Collifornia Pa. 57, Foundation Collifornia Pa. 57, Stipper (1976). Collifornia Pa. 57, Vol. 57, Stipper (1976). Collifornia Pa. 57, Stipper (19 Richard Stockton bs, Rowan by Rosemont 73, Immaculata G Scannon 67, Wilkes S Scannon 67, Wilkes S Staten Island 79, MYCCT 51 Syracuse 72, Providence 51 Vermont 85, Stony Brook 75 WUT Tech 59, Virginia St. 57 West Chester 80, Millersville 61 Widener 49, Abright 41 Yale 46, Delaware St. 45 SOUTH

Catawba 78, Newberry 48
Chowan 63, N.C. Wesleyan 62
Clayton St. 77, Armstrong Atlantic 63
Eckerd 75, St. Leo 54
Ferrum 86, Peace 56
Florida Southern 69, Rollins 57 Florida Southern 69, Rollins 57 Georgia College 72, Kennesaw 58 Greensboro 49, Methodist 48 Mars Hill 74, Tusculum 67 Nova Southeastern 55, Barry 54 S.C.-Aliken 70, N.C.-Pembroke 48 S.C.-Upstate 62, Francis Marion 49 SE Louislana 68, Sam Houston 51, 61 Tampa 68, Florida Tech 54

Tampa 66, Florida Tech 54
Wingate 71, Presbyterian 66
MIDWEST
Baldwin-Wallace 62, John Carroll 50
Benedictine,Ill. 68, Clarke 52
Bethel, Minn. 73, St. Thomas, Minn. 69

Baller Sch. Link-Part-Indiglis. 88
Cent. Micropian Sch. Kernit S. 12
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Cent. Micropian Sch. Micropian S Butler 64, Ind.-Pur.-Indpls. 48 Carleton 63, St. Catherine 44 Cent. Michigan 58, Kent St. 52

Wis-Wiltewater 69, Wis-Eau Claire 66 Wittenberg 64, Kenyon 35 Youngstown St. 62, Loyola of Chicago 55 SOUTHWEST Texas St. 66, Nicholls St. 65 Texas Tech 79, Texas 62 FRAW WEST Montana St. 8811lings 68, Montana Tech 39

Medibank International

Tennis

Thursday

At The Sydney, Interests of Tennis Centre Sydney, Australia: Transis Centre Sydney, Australia: WTA, \$55,500 Surface, Australia: WTA, \$55,500 Surface, Starf-Outdoor Surface, Starf-Outdoor Surface, Starf-Outdoor Surface, Surface,

Western Western Western Western Western Demokrate (D. Russis, def. Patty Peru Studi. China. def. Nadia Petrova G. Maria Mella Petro (B. Russis, General Russis

(5). Igor Andreev and Nikolay Davydenko, Rus-sla, def. Tomas Berdych and Radek Stepanek, Czech Republic, 2-1, retired. Arnaud Clement and Michael Llodra, France, def. Wayne Black and Kevin Ullyett (4), Zimbabwe, 6-3, 6-4.

(4), Zimbabwe, 6-3, 6-4.

Women
Semfinals
Elena Dementleva, Russia, and Al Sugily
ma (3), Japan, def. Conchita Martinez ar
Virginia Ruano Pascual (2), Spain, 6-3, 6-4.
Biyanne Stewart and Samartha Stosu
Australia, def. Maria Kirlienko, Russia, ar
Amastasilya Yakimova, Belarns, walkover.

Kooyong Classic

Thursday
At Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: Exhibition
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Semifinals

Semifinals
Andy Roddick, United States, def. Andre
Agassi, United States, 6-5, retired.
Relegation
David Nalbandian, Argentina, def. Gaston
Gaudio, Argentina, 6-3, 6-1.

MURAWOS

ALREADY

Nicolas Massu, Chile, def. Ivan Ljubicic, Croatia, 6-4, 6-4.

Heineken Open

Thursday At ASB Bank Tennis Centr

AL ASS Entervally Centre
Auckland New Yealand
Purse: \$426,000 (intl. series)
Surface (hard-butdoor
Quatrelinals
Olivier Rochus, Belgium, def. Guillermo
Coria (1), Argentina, 6-4, 6-2ille, def. Robby
Fernando Guractez (5), 6-2ille, def. Robby
Juan Ignacio Chela (6), Agentina, def. Potito Starace, Rayl, 6-1, 7-6 (5).
Jan Nemych, Czech Repoblic, def. Jose Aca3828, Argentina, 6-4, 7-5.

Moorilla International

At The Domain Tennis Centre
Hobert, Australia
Purse: \$11,000 (Tier V)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Semifinals
Ahea, China, def. Li Na, China, 3-6, 6-4,

6-0. Gisela Dulko (2), Argentina, def. Iveta Be-nesova (3), Czech Republic, 7-5, 6-2.

Canberra Women's Classic

Thursday At The National Sports Club Canberra, Australia Purse: \$110,000 (Tier V) Surface: Hard-Outdoor

Surface: Hard-Outdoor Singles Melinda czink (Harderfinals Melinda czink Undary, def. Marlene We-lindasy Lee-Waters, United States, def. Anca Barna, Germany, 6-4, 6-2 Ana Ivanovic, Serbia-Montenegro, def. Marion Bartol (d), France, e. 1, 2-0, Fettred. Yuliana Fedix, Ukraine, def. Silvia Farina Elia (1), Haly, 6-2, 6-4.

Deals

Wednesday's transactions BASEBALL U.S. BASEBALL FEDERATION - Named Mark

S. BASEBAL FEDBATION-Named Mart.
Prior, Nation Street, Chris Lubanski and Bridget Verlennan of the Usabaski and Bridget Verlennan of the Usabaski Daniel Delivers of the Usabaski Delivers of the Usabaski Delivers of the National Conference and Parameter of the National Conference of the Nati

ract of Paul Seiner, executions and Eco, through 2005.

American League

BOSTON RED SOX—Agreed to terms with NF Ramon Vazquez on a one-year contract.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS—Agreed to terms with RHP Kelichi Yabu on a one-year con-

act. SEATTLE MARINERS—Agreed to te with RHP Gil Meche on a one-year contract.

TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS—Agreed to terms
with LHP Mark Guthria on a minor league

TORONTO BLUE JAYS—Acquired INF Shea

National League
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS—Agreed to
erms with LHP Shawn Estes on a one-year

contract.
FLORIDA MARLINS—Agreed to terms with
C Paul LoDuca on a three-year contract.
HOUSTON ASTROS—Agreed to terms with
RHP Turk Wendell on a minor league conract.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms with RHP Brian Meadows on a one-year con-

Tract.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS—Agreed to terms with RHP Toby Borland, RHP Chris Gissell, RHP Bob File, INF Mike Bell, INF Wilton Guerrero, INF Abraham Nunez, OF Raul Gonzalez and OF Brandon Berger on minor league contracts

SAN DIEGO PADRES—Agreed to terms with SAN DIEGO PADRES—Agreed to terms with LHP Chris Hammond on a one-year contract. BASKETBALL NATIONAL BASKETBALL WASHINGTON WIZARDS—Activated FEAT TO make The Christopher Christopher Continents Basketball Association Continental Basketball Association (DAN) STANPEDE—Signed F JaySon Will-IDMO STANPEDE—Signed F JaySon Will-

iams.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

DETROIT LIONS—Signed LB Steve Baggs
and WR Got Baggs.

Martinez and LB Scott Genord to NFL Europe.

SOCER

Major League Soccer

LOS ANGELES GALAXY—Traded F Alejan-

ANGELES GALAXY—Traded F Alejan-dro Moreno, D Chris Aloisi and the sixth se-lection in the first-round of the 2005 draft to San Jose for D Todd Dunivant, G Steve Cro-nin and the first selection in the first-round of the 2005 draft

of the 2005 draft.

COLLEGE

LSU—Agreed to terms with Les Miles, foot-

COLLEGE

LAyred to Serms with cest files of the solutions of the solutions

SOUTH FLORIDA—Announced OL Danny Muy and WR Cedric Hill will transfer to the

Lamar 87, McNeese St. 81 Northwestern St. 69, Texas-Arlington 58 TCU 73, Tulane 62 Texas A&M 74, Texas 63



"NEA THUSESALL IS THE
ONE-OWNER BACKETBALL VIDEO GAME
HIGHLIGHTHE THE PLANE HAS
LIFESTYLE OF NEA SUPERSTARS.
LIFESTYLE OF NEAR SUPERSTARS.
LIFESTYLE OF NEAR SUPERSTARS.
AND DUNKING IN YOUR GRILL."

THOUGHT THE NBA WAS WICKED COOL 1- King RIVE THIS? "NEW FOR 2005! PACERZ-PISTONZ BARBED-WRED-CAGE DEATH-CHALLENGE REMATCH!

AND THE NBA

ACTUALLY APPROVES IT

Agassi might be latest Aussie withdrawal

Hip injury could force American to join growing list of no-shows

BY JOHN PYE

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Andre Agassi might be forced to join the growing list of high-profile absentees from the Australian Open after injuring his hip in an exhibition tournment.

"It's a mighty big spectrum of possibilities right now," said Agassi, a four-time Australian Open champion, who was trailing Andy Roddick 6-5 in a Kooyong Classic match when he retired Thursday.

Agassi said he felt tightness in the muscle at the front of his right hip and would have an MRI to determine the damage.

"The good news is that it didn't just tear, it was tightening up and that can be your body protecting itself, which is hopefully more of the issue," Agassi said. "That wasn't confortable out there at all, what I was feeling. I have to wait and see what I'm dealing with—it's a pretty scary feeling out there when something doesn't feel right and is getting worse.

"It's very disappointing and I'll have to do my best to deal with it."

Roddick will face the winner of Friday's semifinal between top-ranked Roger Federer and Tim Henman.

In playoffs for fifth-eighth places on Thursday, defending champion David Nalbandian beat fellow Argentine Gaston Gaudio 6-1, 6-3, and Olympic gold medalist Nicolas Massu defeated Ivan Liubicic 6-4, 6-4.



Andre Agassi, above, said he felt tightness in the muscle at the front of his right hip, forcing him to leave a match against Andy Roddick late in the first set on Thursday.

While Agassi's attendance in the Australian Open is only in doubt, former Wimbledon and U.S. Open finalist Mark Philippoussis pulled out of it because of an adductor muscle problem that forced him out of

the recent Hopman Cup.

The Australian Open women's draw has also been depleted by injuries.

Defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne pulled out last week because a knee problem and her fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters was ruled out with persistent wrist pain. Jennifer Capriati, a two-time winner withdrew Wednesday be-

cause of a recurring right shoulder injury. Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport had to forfeit her quarterfinal match against Australia's Samantha Stosur in the Sydney International on Thursday due to bronchitis, 10 days after she withdrew from the Hopman Cup to give her injured knee extra time to best.

Agassi hasn't ruled himself out.

"I was not counting on this being the end of the day for me," he said. "Maybe in a few days I'll have a much better sense of what my hopes will be."

On Wednesday, the 34-year-old Agassi said he felt he was in top physical condition for the Open and was hoping "to have some magical things happen."

He said he'd trimmed down to about 163 pounds from about 176 after concentrating on fitness instead of tennis technique during the offseason.

Despite all the conditioning, Agassi said he first felt pain in his hip midway through the first set, and briefly approached the umpire's chair in the 10th game.

"It got to a point where it wasn't doing anybody any good for me to stay out there. It was a difficult decision, but a clear one." Agassi said. "I have been through it before — enough to know that it was only getting worse."



Defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne, left, Mark Philippoussis, below, Jennifer Capriati and Kim Clijsters will not play in the Australian Open.



Agassi said it was not a recurrence of the hip injury that forced him to miss Wimbledon last year, saying it was a joint rather than a muscle injury.

Agassi won at Kooyong in 2000, 2001 and 2003, and each of those years went on to win the Australian Open. An injury in the annual exhibition event cost him a chance to win three consecutive Australian titles in 2002, when he injured his wrist playing Pete Sampras in the Kooyong final.

That year, he withdrew on the opening day at Melbourne Park.

Wie is just one of the boys this week

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — Depth on the PGA Tour takes on a new meaning in the Sony Open. On the far left end of the practice range at Waialae Country Club, 15-year-old Michelle Wie was making a crisp sound with every iron she struck, getting ready for her annual practice round with Ernie Els. A short time later, 55-year-old Tom Kite

arrived and began hitting balls from the same spot. Kite has spent the past five years primarily on the Champions Tour, but wanted to take one more crack at the kids.

A 10th-grade girl wasn't what he had in

mind.

"It's amazing how the sport h

"It's amazing how the sport has changed," Kite said.

The tour shifts gears Thursday, going from a winners-only field in the Mercedes Championships to the first full-field event of the year in the Sony Open.

It could have been billed as "Three Old Men and a Little Lady," but that was before 53-year-old Dick Mast earned one of the four spots from Monday qualifying, putting him in the field at Waialae along with fellow Champions Tour players Kite, Craig Stadler and Peter Jacobses

Vijay Singh gives the Sony Open a No. 1 presence for the first time since the world rankings began in 1986.

Els could give the tournament its first three-peat champion. The 35-year-old South African has won the past two years in a playoff, over Harrison Frazar last year and Aaron Baddelev in 2003. The field also includes Retief Goosen, Stewart Cink, Adam Scott and David Toms. Still, the focus for at least the first two days is on a 15-year-old girl who stands about 6 feet tall, wears hoop earrings and

can rip it.

Ryan Palmer played with Wie last week in the Mercedes Championships pro-am

in the Mercedes Championships pro-am and came with this impression. "If you're not watching her and just lis-

tening, it sounds like one of us out here,' he said.

Wie has more PGA Tour experience that five men in the field — Justin Bolli, Matt Davidson, Sean O'Hair, Euan Walters and Rob Rashell, all of whom are tour rookies.

Expectations of her are higher. A year ago, the teen prodigy knocked in a few putts from here to Kauai, shot 68 and missed the cut by one shot. Even so, it was the best score ever by a female competing

Her goal this year is to play all four rounds, and the ultimate would be a top-20 finish.

Wie already has played about a dozen practice rounds at Waialae, never worse than 75 and twice at 66. Her stroke average at Waialae in the months leading up to the Sony Open is 1½ shots fewer than it was last year.

as iast year. But she remains realistic

"People always expect that if you're so close, then you definitely should make the cut this year," she said. "But it has a lot to do with luck and the way you're playing that day. And hopefully, I'll catch a good day."

She had a good day Tuesday, and a long one. Arriving at 7 a.m. to get ready for a practice round with the Big Easy, she later played in the Pro-Junior Golf Challenge

with actor Adam Sandler.

Wie didn't leave Waialae until 5:30 p.m., as the sun began to dip over Diamond Head. While some question whether competing

against the pros — men or women — is better career training than trying to beat amateurs her own age, Wie made it clear that she is thinking differently from most.

"I never really wanted to be known as winning 50-some-odd tournaments," she said. "I always wanted to be known as someone who did crazy stuff ... stuff that no one ever thought of I just want to push myself to the limit I want to be known as people that changed the world, change how people think."

Jim Furyk is looking to change his fortunes after a lost year.

The Sony Open brings back wistful memories of 2004, when Furyk missed half of the season recovering from surgery on his left wrist. It was at Waialae when the pain went from being a little uncomfortable to getting his attention. Despite a remarkably quick recovery, Furyk failed to win on the PGA Tour for the first time in six years.

"I made peace with last year a long time ago," Furyk said. "The most difficult part of last year was toward the end. There was six weeks to go, and I was just starting to get comfortable. There was that sense of urgency. But once October ended, I started looking forward to '05."



Al

Michelle Wie (left), who missed the cut in the Sony Open by one shot last year, played a practice round Tuesday with two-time defending champ Ernie Els (right).

Kite is looking back as much as he is forward.

Qualifying for the U.S. Open last year at Shinnecock Hills reminded him how much he enjoyed spending time on the PGA Tour.

Then he realized he had one more year left on tour, thanks to being in the top 50 in career money.

"If you've ever played in the big leagues, that's where you want to play," he said. "It gets in your blood."

Brady pleased to be out of spotlight

BY HOWARD ULMAN The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. - Tom Brady already has been photo-graphed with Pope John Paul II. Super Bowl trophy and Bridget Moynahan, his actress girlfriend.

So he doesn't feel slighted to be spending a week in the shadows of Peyton Manning's great season.

"I have had way too much attention over the last three years to ever think that," he said. "I mean, no way. No way.

It still takes a lot to put the two-time Super Bowl MVP in the background, but no one has had a season like Manning's - an NFL-record 49 touchdown passes, just 10 interceptions and the best passer rating, 121.1, in league history.

Brady's numbers weren't nearly as impressive - 28 scoring sses, 14 interceptions and the fifth-best passer rating in the AFC. But he did lead the Patriots to a 14-2 record. The Colts were 13-2 behind Manning before he sat out most of the last game, a loss to Denver.

But a week later, Manning threw four touchdown passes in a 49-24 wild-card win over the

"It's not tennis. It's not an individual sport," Patriots tight end Christian Fauria said. "We have a lot of guys that contribute so if they want to call out one person that's fine, but the majority of the time most of us don't really care. "We only care about one thing,

and that's winning. Brady and the Patriots have

done plenty of that the past four seasons. He's made 62 consecutive regular-season starts, winning 48. He's also 6-0 as a playoff



New England quarterback and two-time Super Bowl MVP Tom Brady (above), who is 5-0 lifetime against Indianapolis, has been happy to concede the media spotlight to Peyton Manning this week.

game," Brady said, "When you play a guy like Peyton, you don't want to give him the ball too much, any more than he should have it, because they're probably going to go down and score some **New England**

Manning has a deeper group of targets for his passes, led by wide receivers Marvin Harrison, Reggie Wayne and Brandon Stokley who each had more than 1,000 yards receiving. David Givens and David Patten were the only Patriots with more than 500 yards receiving.

Brady also must be especially because the Colts lead the NFL in turnover differential.

"Obviously, you don't want to get in the habit of turning the ball over versus this team," he said. That doesn't mean the Patriots

will play more conservatively than usual to avoid mistakes that can lead to Indianapolis points

"The reasons why we've been successful around here is because we've played our style," Brady said

So has Indianapolis, which features a more wide-open attack, long gains and a quarterback who has commanded the spotlight all season while Brady piled up wins

"I don't think it bothers him whatsoever," Fauria said. "Those accolades are great, but the most important thing is get to the final show. I think if you get that on your résumé, it holds as much water as any other thing you can get during the season."

Pennington returns to practice for Jets

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. - Jets quarterback Chad Pennington re turned to practice Thursday, one day after sitting out with a stom

briefs

ach virus Pennington did light drills and stretching

during the 15 minutes practice is open to reporters, smiling and laughing with his teammates, just days before the Jets' playoff game Saturday at Pittsburgh.

But Quincy Carter was still ab sent after leaving the team to be with his ill mother in Georgia. No. 3 quarterback Brooks Bollinger

goes into the game as the backup. Defensive end John Abraham, listed as questionable with a sprained right knee, also practiced. But The Star-Ledger of Newark cited an unnamed team official as saying the three-time Pro Bowler would not play Saturday. The team had said his availability would be a game-time decision.

In other Jets news, linebacker Eric Barton was fined \$7,500 by the NFL for his hit on Drew Brees during last weekend's playoff game at San Diego. Barton said Thursday he plans to appeal the

Source: Packers' Sherman will be stripped of GM's duties

MILWAUKEE - Packers President Bob Harlan plans to strip coach Mike Sherman of his general manager duties and is targeting the Seahawks' Ted Thompson as a replacement, a Green Bay team source told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed published reports that Harlan is nursuing Thompson who is Seattle's VP of football operations and used to work for the Packers Thompson was scouting the

East-West Shrine game in the San Francisco Bay area and was un-available for comment. The Milwaukee Journal Senti-

nel, Green Bay Press-Gazette and Wisconsin State Journal all reported Thursday that the Packers want to hire Thompson.

McCombs wants Fox's Buck off Vikings-Eagles telecast

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. - Minnesota Vikings owner Red Mc-Combs asked Fox Sports to remove play-by-play announcer Joe Buck from Sunday's playoff game at Philadelphia because of his sharp criticism of wide receiver Randy Moss, and was turned down by the network.

After catching a touchdown pass in last weekend's win at Green Bay, Moss celebrated in the end zone by pretending to pull down his pants and moon Packers fans. Buck immediately called it a 'disgusting act.'

A two-sentence news release isned by the team said McCombs felt Buck's comments "suggested a prejudice that surpassed objective reporting.

NFL injury report

NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league:

redgive:
Sturdey
NEW YORK JETS (1.1-6) A PITTSBURGH
NEW YORK JETS (1.1-6) A PITTSBURGH
DE JOHN Abraham (June), PGIGBBLE; GIE
DE JOHN Abraham (June), PGIGBBLE; GIE
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DE JOHN JETS (1.1-6) A PITTSBURGH
HOUSE (1.1-6) A PITTSBURGH
HOUSE

Falcons: Have no injuries to report.

Falcons: Have no injuries to report.

Sunday

MINNESOTA VIKINGS (9-8) AT PHILA
DELPHIA EAGLES (13-3) — Vikings:

DOUBTFUL: S Corey Chavous (elbow); RB

Moe Williams (ankle), PROBABLE: WR

Kelly Campbell (shoulder); WR Randy

Moss (ankle): LB Mike Nathal (proa).

Hollist Thomas (elbow): El Nate Wayne Middle Middle

Roethlisberger exudes calm before playoff debut

BY ALAN ROBINSON The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH - Ben Roethlisberger glances quickly from his left to his right, looking for a defender who might break at the last second and disrupt his pass. With no one in sight he throws a perfect line-drive into his receiver's chest.

Just another day on the job for perhaps the most scrutinized rookie quarterback in NFL history, only this wasn't practice or a game. It was the middle of the Steelers' locker room Wednesday, as Roethlisberger playfully tossed around a plastic football, using TV cameramen as blockers and Jeff Reed - ves. a kicker as his primary receiver. Awfully nervous before his

"I think I hide it pretty good,"

10:30 p.m. Sunday

AFN-A, AFN-P, AFN Radio

starter and 5-0 against the Colts,

including a win in Foxhoro in last

year's AFC championship game.

In that game, he outplayed Man-

ning, who threw four intercep-tions. In this season's opening

27-24 win over the Colts. Brady

again had the edge, throwing for

three touchdowns and 335 yards.

while Manning threw for two

and again," Patriots strong safety

Rodney Harrison said. "It's not

In fact, Brady is among Man-

ning's many admirers.

"He's the leader of that team,"

Brady said. "It seems like the effi-

ciency of that offense is better

than it's ever been in the history

of the league and that's shown in

Brady doesn't see Sunday's game as a matchup with Man-

ning, although that will be crucial

off games, the quarterback who

plays better usually does win the

"Usually when you play in play-

to the outcome

how many games they've won."

about getting all the attention.'

"He just gets the job done again

touchdowns and 256 yards.

Game time is Central Europe

Roethlisberger said as he awaits Saturday's postseason debut against the Jets. "There's a little bit of pressure out there obviously because you lose, you go home On the other hand I don't want to go out there and have too much pressure and stress on me. because then you never know how I'm going to play."

No rookie QB has played better than Roethlisberger, whose 13-0 record as a starter is unprecedented. Previously, no rookie had won more than his first six starts. much less one playing on only the fourth team to go 15-1 since the NFL started playing 16-game seasons in 1978

Roethlisberger's remarkable



10:30 p.m. Saturday AFN-Atlantic, Pacific & Radio Game time is Central European

run has made him the Steelers most popular player since their four Super Bowl victories in six seasons from 1974-79. His No. 7 iersev is a best seller; his infrequent public appearances trigger mile-long traffic jams.

For all the poise, maturity and skill Roethlisberger has shown

the Steelers' 72-season history, they are asking him to do the seemingly impossible: Win the Super Bowl as a rookie.

After all, no rookie OB has taken his team to football's biggest game, much less won it. Since the NFL merger in 1970, only one rookie NFL quarterback, the Buccaneers' Shaun King in 1999, won his first playoff start; the other two rookies to win (Dieter Brock, Pat Haden) had experience in other pro leagues.

Yet anything other than Pittsburgh's first Super Bowl championship in 25 years will be an enormous letdown - not just for Big Ben, but for coach Bill Cowher, who has eight division titles in 13 seasons but no championship ring, and residents of this Steelers-mad town.

Roethlisberger struggled mightily against the Jets in a 17-6 victory on Dec. 12, throwing for only 24 yards in the first half before finishing nine of 19 for 144 yards. It didn't help that his top deep threat, Plaxico Burress, sat out with a sore hamstring, allowing the Jets to load the line of scrim mage and take away the run until the Steelers scored 14 noints in the fourth quarter.

But as poorly as he played two interceptions and a sea-son-low 33.6 passer rating - Roethlisberger won. No doubt the Jets will try to force him to do it again, with defensive end Shaun Ellis saying, "You have to stop the run. Everybody knows Pittsburgh loves to run the ball."

Indy poised to pass a tough test

BY DAVE GOLDBERG The Associated Press

or a team that's lost five straight times to its upcoming opponent, the Indianapolis Colts are getting a lot of respect.

The opponent in question, of course, is New England, which has won two of the past three



NFL titles. And the game in question is Sunday in Foxboro, where the Patriots beat the

Colts in last season's AFC championship game and again in this season's opener.

Nonetheless, the Patriots are fa-

Nonetheless, the Patriots are favored by just 2½ points, less than the three points a team normally gets for being at home.

Next to Pittsburgh, the Colts are the NFL's hottest team and MVP Peyton Manning is the NFL's hottest quarterback

Indy has won nine of 10, the only loss being the final regular-season game in Denver in which it played backups. The Colts took care of that loss at home last week, dispatching the Broncos from the playoffs 49-24 in a game they led 35-3 at halftime.

That season opener, a 27-24 victory by the Patriots, is part of the reason why this game is outside in the cold New England winter.

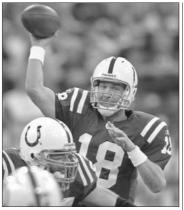
"When we lost that game up there, we felt it would probably cost us a chance to play a home game," said Colts coach Tony Dungy. "That's what we have now."

That clearly should slow down Manning.

Of his record 49 touchdown passes, 32 were indoors — 26 at home and six more at Detroit's Ford Field. In last year's title game, he threw four interceptions and he had another in the opener — picked off in the end zone on Indy's opening drive by Tedy Bruschi.

But he has one potential advantage here.

Ty Law, New England's best cornerback, has finally been de-



Peyton Manning (18) is eager to make amends for last year's four-interception performance at New England in the AFC championship game.

Tyrone Poole, the other starter on the sideline. No team overcomes injuries better than the Patriots — last year, this year, every year. But ...

COLTS, 27-24.

Minnesota (plus 9) at Philadelphia: A lot of Eagles' fans jumped off the bandwagon when Terrell Owens was hurt and more hung their heads when Andy Reid tanked the last two regular-season games, playing subs after his

vantage in the NFC.
Yes, the Vikings can be dangerous — even with a sore ankle,
Randy Moss caught two touchdown passes last week.

But give Reid the benefit of the doubt. Even without Owens, the Eagles have a healthy Brian Westbrook, whose absence from last year's playoffs deprived Philadelphia of what was then its only game-breaking player. ... EA-

GLES, 31-21.

New York Jets (plus 9) at Pittsburgh: The Jets are better than
their reputation, which has been
sullied somewhat by the New
York media, which decided to ignore the fact that the 5-6 record to
finish the regular season was due
in large part to Chad Pennington's shoulder injury.

Pennington looked fine last week in New York's overtime win in San Diego — certainly better than he did in a 17-6 loss in Pittsburgh on Dec. 12 when he was playing hurt.

But the Steelers are rested and couldn't even lose when they tried — they won their 14th straight playing subs in Buffalo against a team that would have made the playoffs had it won.

Probably closer than the spread but ... **STEELERS**, **24-18**.

St. Louis (plus 7) at Atlanta:
The Rams insist they're playing
their best now and they seem to
be—they beat the Jets at home in
the regular-season finale and won
in Seattle last week.

They also get the indoor fast track they like at the Georgia Dome, where they lost 34-17 in the second week of the season.

But they are just 3-6 on the road this season. Two of the wins were over the inconsistent Seahawks and the other was against San Francisco, easily the NFL's worst team this season.

And whatever the fast track does for the Rams, it also does a lot for Michael Vick, who ran for 109 yards and was 14 of 19 for 179 yards in the first meeting. ... FAL-CONS, 33-24.

Last week: 2-2 (spread), 1-3 (straight up)

McNabb prefers playoff pressure

BY ROB MAADDI The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb peeked into the interview room as Brian Westbrook approached the podium, and shouted three questions.

"What are you going to do without T.O.? Are you going to get the ball more? What's the mood of the team?" McNabb said in a squeaky, high-pitched tone, drawing laughter from the crowd.

Tired of hearing those questions himself, the Philadelphia Esgles' five-time Pro Bowl quarterback interjected some humor into a mundane Wednesday news conference. McNabb brings the same lighthearted spirit into the locker room and the huddle.

Pressure? What pressure? McNabb certainly isn't feeling any as the heavily favored Eagles (13-3) prepare to play the Minnesota Vikings (9-8) in an NFC divisional playoff game on Sunday.

With star receiver Terrell Owens sidelined by an ankle inju-



AD

Eagles QB Donovan McNabb said Wednesday, "I love to step out there and everybody is standing on their feet with their mouth wide open to find out what I'm going to do next."

ry, McNabb realizes the burden of carrying the offense falls on him. He welcomes the challenge.

him. He welcomes the clause-sp. "You guys said T.O. took the pressure off of me. Now I guess I have all the pressure again," Mc-Nabb said. "I love pressure. I love to step out there and everybody is standing on their feet with their mouth wide open to find out what mouth with the country of the country of

McNaob is coming off the best season of his six-year career. He set a team record with 3,875 yards passing, became the first NFL player to throw for more than 30 touchdowns (31) and less than 10 interceptions (eight), and his passer rating of 104.7 was second in the NFC.

Often criticized for being inaccurate, McNabb drastically improved his completion percentage — his 64.0 percent was almost six points higher than his career average — and broke an NFL record by completing 24 consecutive passes over two games.

None of the personal glory matters if the Eagles don't win the Super Bowl. After losing the past three NFC championship games, nothing else is considered a success in a city that hasn't celebrated a winner since the 76ers won the NBA title in 1983.



"In this world that we live in, you're not great unless you win a Super Bowl," McNabb said. "It's sad that you have to be judged by that, but we just have to play our game and know what we're seeing and go out and execute."

With Owens joining McNabb and Westbrook this season, the offense nearly was unstoppable in the first 12 games. The Eagles won nine of the first dozen games by double-digit margins, including five wins by at least 21 points.

Owens' injury was a devastating blow for Philadelphia, which lost both of its games without the Pro Bowl wideout, mainly because many of the starters were rested with nothing on the line.

But the Eagles didn't have Owens, who has an outside chance of playing in the Super Bowl if Philly gets there, when they went to the past three conference title games. McNabb and Westbrook are playing their best, and the defense has been outstanding this season.

"We have more weapons than just T.O," McNabb said, referring to wideouts Todd Pinkston and Freddie Mitchell and tight ends Chad Lewis and L.J. Smith.

"I know you guys have questions about the receiving corps since T.O. is hurt. Our receiving corps is fine, we'll make plays and we'll win the game."

Westbrook, so valuable that coach Andy Reid sat him out the last two regular-season games, figures to draw most of the attention from Minnesota's defense.

"They still have to respect the other guys on this team," West-brook said.

Throughout his career, Mc-Nabb has earned respect for his leadership skills and the way he has handled adversity, beginning with being booed loudly by Eagles fans when his name was announced as the No. 2 pick of the 1999 NFL Draft.

In 2002, McNabb threw four TD passes on a broken ankle against Arizona, then sat out the last six regular-season games.

He overcame the worst start of his career last season, plang with a sprained right thumb that affected his grip, and an anklet affected his grip, and an subthing his mobility. He was boode by fans, and also dealt with the racially charged critique of then-ESPN commentator Rush Limbaugh, who said McNabb was overrated because the media wants to see a black quarterback succeed.

"There are a lot of outside pressures and guys like Donovan are able to put that aside and concentrate on the thing that means the most and that is individual play and performance," Reid said.



Estes signs with Diamondbacks

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

Shawn Estes is the newest member of Arizona's revamped rotation, and All-Star catcher Paul Lo Duca plans to stick with the Florida Marlins for a while.

Estes finalized a \$2.5 million, one-year contract with the busy Diamondbacks, who also traded infielder Shea Hillenbrand to the Toronto Blue Javs on Wednesday.



Arizona's moves came one day after it sent Randy Johnson to the New York Yankees and acquired Shawn Green and Javier Vazquez in separate trades.

Estes turned down a two-year offer for more money from the Washington Nationals. He and his wife, Heather, and their sons, 16-month-old Jackson and 3-month-old Cody, live in Paradise Valley, about a 20-minute drive to Bank One Ballpark.

"I was single for a long time in the big leagues, and playing with guys that had children I saw how hard it was for them to be away." Estes said.

The left-hander becomes the third new starting pitcher on a Diamondbacks roster that has been dramatically overhauled after the team lost 111 games last season. Arizona also signed free agent Russ Ortiz.

The 31-year-old Estes was 15-8 with a 5.84 ERA in a career-high 34 starts for Colorado last season.

"I rededicated myself physically," he said.
"I knew I was going to have to prove myself again and kind of reinvent myself."

Hillenbrand, acquired from Boston in May

2003, hit a team-high .310 for the Diamondbacks last season with 15 home runs and 80 RBIs. A third baseman most of his career, he played first last season for Arizona.

Lo Duca agreed to an \$18 million, three-year contract with Florida, avoiding salary arbitration. The two-time All-Star was acquired in a trade with the Los Angeles Dodgers last summer.

"It was an easy decision," he said. "Going into this offseason, my mind was set on coming back. It was never an issue.

It was just a matter of getting the X's and O's basically done."

Three other players who were eligible for arbitration agreed to one-year deals: Seattle right-hander off Il Meche (82,58,000). Pitts burgh right-hander Brian Meadows (81,125,000) and Boston infielder Ramon Vazquez (8700,000). Ninety-five players remain eligible to file for arbitration by Friday's deadline.

Oakland added a pitcher, agreeing to a \$1 million, one-year contract with Keiichi Yabu. The 36-year-old right-hander played 11 seasons with the Hanshin Tigers in Japan and went 6-9 with a 3.02 ERA in 19 games last season.

"He's had a lot of success in Japan," Athletics general manager Billy Beane said. "We found with a lot of the recent guys who came over, you can really translate their performance in Japan to the United States. He also had a strong interest in coming to Oakland. He's a four-pitch guy with good command."

Houston agreed to a minor league contract with right-hander Turk Wendell, and Tampa Bay agreed to a minor league deal with left-hander Mark Guthrie.

MLB wants Nationals owner by April

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Major League Baseball still is targeting April for finding an owner for the Washington Nationals, now that the new home of the former Montreal Expos has been determined.

"I would expect that we would star the diligence with the prospective buyers within a week to 10 days," baseball's chief operating officer Bob DuPuy said Wednesday during a break in the owners' meeting. "We've got materials assembled in New York, and we'll be inviting groups in, and we'll go from there."

Asked if six to eight prospective ownership groups were expected, DuPuy said, "a little higher than that, and my guess is it will sort itself out over time."

Ownership of the Washington, Oakland and Milwaukee franchises were to be discussed during the two-day session at a north Scottsdale resort.

Owners are scheduled to vote Thursday on the \$223 million sale of the Milwaukee Brewers from the family of commissioner Bud Selig to Mark Attanasio. Some met Wednesday with prospective Oakland Athletics buyer Lewis Wolff.

Baseball's other 29 teams purchased the Expos before the 2002 season, then began a search for a new home for the franchise.

Washington finally was chosen, but that agreement almost fell through before public financing for a new 41,000-seat stadium was approved last month by a 7-6 vote by the District Columbia Council. The team will play in revamped RFK Stadium while the new ballpark is constructed.

The Nationals open their season April 4 at Philadelphia and play their home opener 10 days later against Arizona.

MLB: BALCO fallout helped push for plan

MLB, FROM BACK PAGE

Giambi reportedly told the grand jury he used steroids for about three years and that they had been provided by Bonds' personal trainer, Greg Anderson, who has been indicted in the BALCO case. Bonds testified he used BALCO-supplied substances he believed to be flaxseed oil and arthritic balm but which prosecutors believed were steroids, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. In October, Sheffield told Sports Illustrated he had used a cream provided by Anderson and BALCO that he later learned was a steroid. None has been disciplined, and Yankee General Manager Brian Cashman said this week he expected Giambi to report for spring training.

Tony Clark, another senior union leader, said public questions about steroid use had caused players to think about a tougher agreement.

"The integrity of our game was beginning to come under fire, and there are too many great players, past and present, that deserve to be celebrated for their ability to play this game at a very high level," the free-agent first baseman said in an e-mail. "If a stricter drug policy brings that level of appreciation back, we felt that it was worth pursuing."

Former Nets' player Williams playing for CBA team

The Associated Press

NAMPA, Idaho — Jayson Williams was so happy to be playing basketball again — and so anxious to avoid offending anyone—that he was as generous with his handshakes, hugs and thank yous as he once was with his comical one-liners.

Hoping to return to the NBA, Williams began his comeback bid Wednesday night by scoring two points and grabbing four rebounds in limited action just hours after signing a contract with the Idaho Stampede of the Continental Basketball Association.

Williams, who faces reckless manslaughter charges related to a 2002 shooting at his New Jersey mansion, has said he hopes to use the CBA as a springboard for his return to the NBA.

Williams, who turns 37 next month, quit professional basketball in 2000 because of knee problems

"Interested NBA teams want assurances that I am fully recovered and can withstand the rigors of daily competition," Williams said in a statement Wednesday. "The very competitive CBA will provide me with this opportunity."

The 6-foot-10 forward did not start Wednesday's game against the Yakima Sun Kings, but was the first man off the bench in both halves of Idaho's 117-109 win, playing more than nine minutes.

Sports briefs

He drew a polite cheer from the announced crowd of 2,367 when he first took the floor about midway through the first quarter. "I felt great. I really appreciat-

ed it. I was a little rusty," Williams said after the game. "I'm glad we got a win. These guys look awesome"

Williams appeared to run without problems and was going out of his way to be gracious, at one point profusely thanking a towel girl. He exchanged handshakes and hugs with members of the Sun Kings at halfcourt after the game, and was the last to leave the autograph table.

Williams was acquitted in April of aggravated manslaughter in the Feb. 14, 2002, shooting death of a limousine driver, Costas "Gus" Christofi. He was convicted on four counts stemming from a failed bid to conceal the shoot-

His retrial on a charge of reckless manslaughter is due to begin

Williams, who called the shootna accident, won't be sentenced on the four cover-up convictions until the remaining charge is settled. Possible sentences run from probation to about five years in prison. The reckless manslaughter charge carries a possible 10-year sentence. Williams played nine seasons

for the New Jersey Nets and Philadelphia 76ers. He averaged 10 or more rebounds per game in his final four NBA seasons; his rebounding prowess earned him a trip to the 1998 All-Star game.

Skater Nikodoniov's mom killed on way to Nationals

PORTLAND, Ore. — The mother of Angela Nikodinov, a two-time bronze medalist in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, was killed in a car accident Wednesday morning as the family traveled to the competition.

Delores Nikodinov, 48, of San Pedro, Calif., was pronounced dead at the scene. Angela Nikodinov and her father, Nick, were treated at Legacy Emanuel Hospital and were released. Nikodinov's coach, Igor Pashkevich, is in fair condition at the hospital and was to be kept overnight.

U.S. Figure Skating announced late Wednesday that Nikodinov had withdrawn from the competition. The women's short program is Thursday night.

According to Portland police, Nikodinov and her family were in a shuttle from the airport a little after 9 a.m. when the lime green minivan collided with a Volkswagen Jetta as the van merged onto Interstate 205. The shuttle hit a cement barrier, police said, and the right front tire blew out. The van flipped onto its side and skidded along the pavement for a short distance before coming to a stop, said Sgt. Brian Schmautz, a spokesman for the Portland police. Delores Nikodinow was sitting next to a window that exploded, and Schmautz said she died of head trauma.

"It's our understanding it was more of a fluke, just simply because of the victim's position in the vehicle," Schmautz said. "Had the van not rolled or had she been in a slightly different place, the accident may not have killed her."

Baylor's Smith to coach U.S. baseball team

DURHAM, N.C. — Baylor coach Steve Smith was chosen baseball coach of the national team that will represent the United States this summer.

Smith, an assistant for the 1998

USA national team, will coach a team of college freshmen and sophomores scheduled to compete in Japan and Taiwan.

"Coach Smith is very highly regarded among his peers, and we're extremely excited to welcome him back as our head coach for the upcoming summer," USA Baseball general manager Erampbell said Thursday in a statement. "Steve is an outstanding teacher of the game."

The team is also scheduled to play two three-game series in Durham against yet to be determined international opponents. "I look forward to a great sum-

mer," Smith said. "Representing the United States in international competition is a privilege."

competition is a privilege." Smith is 372-234-1 at Baylor. He has led the team to two NCAA Super Regional appearances and the 2000 Big 12 Conference title.

NASCAR changes qualifying

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.— NASCAR revamped its qualifying procedures on Thursday, guaranteeing a spot in a Nextel Cup race to the top 35 drivers in the points standings.

The next seven positions in the starting field will be awarded to drivers with the fastest qualifying speeds who are not among the top 35 in points. The 43rd and final starting position will still be reserved for a current or past Nextel Cup champion. The system eliminates the old

procedure of teams accruing provisionals throughout the season to gain entry into the starting fields. If a driver didn't qualify in the top 35 on speed, he had to use one of his provisionals to get in.

When the provisionals ran out, the driver was sent home for the weekend no matter where he stood in the points standings.

The new qualifying system will not begin until the sixth race of the season. Through the first five races, the top 35 in the standings of the 2004 points system will be assured a starting spot.

A&M shows Acie in the hole, upsets Texas

Big 12 win is sophomore Law's first

The Associated Press

Texas A&M wasn't getting any national recognition for its 11-0 start and a close loss to Kansas. After a 74-63 upset of No. 10 Texas on

Wednesday night, it's going to be tough to ignore the Aggies.

"I think we've been ahead of schedule a

"I trimk we've been anead of schedule a little bit," said coach Billy Gillispie, who moved over from Texas-El Paso in March. The Aggies' nonconference wins were

Men's Top 25 roundup over the likes of Prairie View A&M, Texas-Permian Basin and Trinity, a Division III school.

a Division III school.
The 65-60 loss at No.
Kansas last week raised some interest.

The win over Texas that ended an 18-game Big 12 losing streak opened a lot of eyes. "It's about having the right guys," Gillispie said, smiling. "It's no magic formula. The story is not about me . . it's about those guys in the white jerseys. The

sky's the limit on what you can achieve."
The start is the best at Texas A&M since
1959-60, and no coach in school history has
had a better start than Gillispie.

"We know where we are in the landscape of college basketball," he said. "We have 14 more Big 12 games and there's not one that you can circle that you know you're going to win."

Acie Law had 24 points and six assists and freshman Joseph Jones added 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Aggies (12-1, 1-1), who were 7-21 last season and finished last in the Big 12 for the third time in four years.

"He's been doing great," Gillispie said of Law. "Acie was fantastic. He was composed and didn't get out of control and ran our offense."

Before a school-record crowd of 12,811, A&M ended the Longhorns' 10-game winning streak at College Station and improved its record in Reed Arena this season to 12-0.

"It feels real good to get the first Big 12 victory," said Law, a sophomore point guard. "A Top 10 team comes in . . . that's a perfect opportunity to show everyone what we can do."

P.J. Tucker led the Longhorns (12-3, 1-1) with 18 points and eight rebounds, and freshman LaMarcus Aldridge added 12 points and eight rebounds.

The Aggies' lead reached 21 points early in the second half. A&M's aggressive pressure defense —

ranked No. 1 nationally in field goal percentage — forced the Longhorns into dozens of off-balance jumpers and threes from way behind the arc.

Texas made one of its first 12 shots and finished 20-for-62 (32 percent). It was the Longhorns' worst shooting effort of the sea-

"They put some pressure on us and were digging back in there," Texas coach Rick Barnes said, "and when that happens, you have to make some shots. We didn't do a particularly great job of that."

No. 1 Illinois 90, Penn St. 64: Luther Head and Dee Brown each made five of the Illini's record 15 three-pointers as they tied the school record with their 17th consecutive victory.

Head had 19 points and Brown added 15 for Illinois (17-0, 3-0 Big Ten), which matched the winning streak of the 1988-89 team, the Illini's last to reach the Final

Geary Claxton had 16 points for the visiting Nittany Lions (6-10, 0-3), who lost their fourth straight.

No. 2 Kansas 71, lowa St. 66: Wayne Simien returned after a four-game absence and had 13 points, nine rebounds and several big plays in 37 minutes to lead the Jayhawks (12-0, 2-0 Big 12).

The senior forward, a preseason All-America, underwent surgery on his left thumb on Dec. 20. Keith Langford, who suffered a concussion in the final minutes of Sunday's win at Kentucky, had 18 points.

"It feels good having him back because that's the man that helps us out on the boards, scores some points for us, makes the game a lot easier for everybody else," said Langford, who also had five assists.

Curtis Stinson had 18 points for the Cyclones (8-5, 0-2), who lost for just the second time in 27 home games under coach Wayne Morgan.

No. 9 Kentucky 69, Vanderbilt 54:

Freshman guard Rajon Rondo scored a career-high 18 points for the Wildcats (11-2, 2-0 Southeastern Conference), who remained perfect in 28 games against Vanderbilt at Rupp Arena, dating to the 1976-77 season.

Corey Smith had 16 points for the Commodores (11-5, 2-1), who had a seven-game winning streak snapped.

Tennessee 64, No. 11 Mississippi St. 63: Scooter McFadgon scored 14 points and the Volunteers (9-6, 2-1 Southeastern Conference) snapped the nation's longest mad winning streak at 16 games

road winning streak at 16 games. Lawrence Roberts had 22 points and 13 rebounds for the Bulldogs (14-3, 2-1), who had won eight straight overall and hadn't

lost on the road since a loss at Tennessee in March 2003.

Mississippi State, which trailed by 16 at

halftime, had several chances at the end, including a jumper by Roberts at the buzzer. No. 18 Cincinnati 84, East Carolina 78:

No. 18 Cincinnati 84, East Carolina 78: Jason Maxiell scored 24 points for the visiting Bearcats (14-1, 3-0 Conference USA),



Texas A&M guard Acie Law IV (1) goes to the basket against Texas forward LaMarcus Aldridge (23) in the second half of the Aggies 74-63 win Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2005.

who have won three straight since losing to top-ranked Illinois.

Corey Rouse had 21 points and 13 re-

bounds for the Pirates (5-10, 0-3), who fell to 0-7 all-time against Cincinnati.

No. 21 George Washington 85, St. his Bonaventure 59: Pops Mensah-Bonsu si

scored 14 points to lead six players in double figures for the Colonials (11-2, 3-0 Atlantic 10). Wade Dunston scored a career-high 25

water Dunston scored a career-night 25 points for the Bonnies (1-13, 0-3), who are off to the worst start in school history and have lost 25 of their last 27, including all six at home this season.

No. 8 Georgia Tech can't slow down No. 3 North Carolina

BY KEITH PARSONS
The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Rashad McCants enjoys perform-

ing for the home crowd.

He gave the North Carolina

fans plenty to cheer about Wednesday night, and surprisingly, most of it came on defense.

Known primarily as a scorer, McCants had a career-high four blocks, and Jawad Williams led a balanced attack with 18 points to help the third-ranked Tar Heels beat No. 8 Georgia Tech 91-69.

McCants, who joined five team-

mates in double figures with 12 points, had three of his rejections in the first half.
"We want to set the tone of the

"We want to set the tone of the game with our defense," McCants said.

He did that early, leaping high to block Will Bynum's first shot of the game. Later, with the game all but decided, the 6-foot-4 Mc-Cants stuffed a dunk by 6-9 Theodis Tarver, then celebrated by hopping across midcourt.

hopping across midcourt.
"I think it was more of just an instinct play," McCants said. "I don't like to let guys score on me, especially going to the goal like that."

and Sean May added 12 for North Carolina (14-1, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), which has won 14 straight since an opening loss was Santa Clara. Point guard Raymond Felton was suspended from that game because he played in a non-sanctioned summer league game, and with him on the court, the Tar Heels have had few chal-

"I feel like I'm the leader of the team," Felton said. "I feel like I'm the one that gets everybody going. I'm the floor general."

The Yellow Jackets (11-3, 2-1)

certainly didn't provide much of a test. Playing without injured guard B.J. Elder for the third straight game, Georgia Tech led only at 1-0, quickly fell behind and never recovered. Jarrett Jack had 24 points and Luke Schenscher finished with 13.

"They're an outstanding team, maybe the best team in the country," Yellow Jackets coach Paul Hewitt said. "But we had some guys not play as well as they're capable of playing. It's one of those

With one matchup against a Top 10 opponent out of the way, North Carolina can turn its attention to Saturday's game at No. 4 Wake Forest. It will be the first meeting ever with both teams in the top five.

"I'm going to enjoy this one," Tar Heels coach Roy Williams said. "Georgia Tech is a big-time freakin' team."

Felton and the other starters had plenty of help from the bench in this one, led by Marvin Williams. In the first half, the Tar Heels' reserves outscored their counterparts 21-0, and it was much the same after the break until both coaches cleared the

Suns run out of gas, lose to rebounding Jazz

The Phoenix Suns were on the losing end of a game for just the fifth time this sea-

After falling behind by 14 points early, the Utah Jazz rallied for their second straight home win over one of the ton teams in the Western Conference with a 115-108 victory over Phoenix on Wednesday night.

The loss was the Suns' first since Dec. 28 at San Antonio, ending their run of seven consecutive victories and dropping their NBA-best record to 31-5.

"I don't think we had the same energy Suns forward Shawn Marion said "We came out of the gates on fire tonight and I think we just relaxed a little bit. And as soon as we relaxed, they became the aggressors and they started getting all the calls."

Utah's bench and rebounding wore down the Suns, who beat Miami 122-107 the previous night. Utah's reserves outscored the Suns' 67-6, and the Jazz won the rebounding battle 55-35. Mehmet Okur, whose last-second offen-

sive rebound and putback gave Utah a 97-96 win over San Antonio on Monday night, finished with 21 points and 17 rebounds — 10 on the offensive glass.

After losing nine straight, the Jazz have won two in a row over teams with the tor two records in the West

"Those are signs of what we can do and those are signs of the team that we have if we do the right thing," said Raja Bell, who scored 19 points off the bench after missNBA

ing five games with inflammation in his right

Keith McLeod finished with 10 points and 11 assists, and Matt Harpring had 16 points and eight rebounds

Phoenix was able to run at will early, but

the Jazz took control in the second quarter and held off everything the Suns had down the stretch

Amare Stoudemire's two free throws with 3:25 left cut the margin to 110-100, but Utah came right back with a three-pointer by the 7-foot Okur.

"We needed something like this," said Lopez, who had 14 points and four assists after coming off the bench, "We need more

Raptors 104. Celtics 93: Morris Peterson made seven three-pointers and scored a career-high 37 points for the Raptors. Chris Bosh added a career-high 26 points and 10 rebounds for Toronto, 6-6

since trading Vince Carter to New Jersey Paul Pierce had 23 points for the Celtics,

who have lost seven straight road games. Wizards 104, Trail Blazers 100: At Washington Gilbert Arenas made a floating runner with 24 seconds left, then stole an inbounds pass and converted it into a breakaway dunk.

The lead changed hands four times in the final 70 seconds, with the Trail Blazers nearly pulling off the win after coming back from a 13-point fourth-quarter deficit. Arenas' floater put the Wizards ahead for good, and his dunk made the score

Pistons 90, Hornets 76: At Auburn Hills, Mich., Ben Wallace had a season-high 19 rebounds and added 11 points to help Detroit snap New Orleans two-game winning streak.

Chauncey Billups scored 25 points for Detroit, and Richard Hamilton had 20 points and a season-high 10 assists.

Magic 87, Timberwolves 80: Hedo Turkoglu scored 26 points and Grant Hill added 20 to help Orlando snap a seven-game road losing streak.

Kevin Garnett matched his career high with 25 rebounds and had 19 points for Minnesota The Timberwolves have lost three straight and 11 of 15.

Bulls 110, 76ers 78: At Chicago, Ben Gordon matched a career high with 31 points, and Eddy Curry added 24 in the surging Bulls' fifth straight victory.

With two five-game winning streaks in the past month, the Bulls have won 11 of their past 14 to move within three games of .500 after losing their first nine games.

Spurs 94, Bucks 79: Tim Duncan scored 21 points, and Tony Parker had 20 to lead the Snurs to their fourth victory in five games. Michael Redd led visiting Milwaukee with 24 points.

Nuggets 95. Lakers 83: At Denver, Carmelo Anthony had his best shooting night in weeks, scoring 17 points on 7-for-14 shooting to help the Nuggets snap a five-game losing streak.



Jazz guard Keith McLeod (25) slips under the arm of Suns forward Shawn Marion (31) during the fourth quarter.

Clippers 103, SuperSonics 92: At Los Angeles, Corey Maggette had 31 points and 10 rebounds and Darrick Martin made three clutch outside shots in the final 2:21

Heat 98. Warriors 91: At Oakland, Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 12 rebounds, and Miami avoided its first three-game losing streak of the season.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference Atlantic Division W L Pct GB

Southwest Division W. L. Pet. GR							
Western Conference							
	Milwaukee	12		.364	9		
	Indiana Chicago		16	.515	6		
	Detroit	20	14	.588	11/2		
	Cleveland Central Div		12	.636	_		
	Atlanta		26	.188	19		
	Charlotte	8	23	.258	161/2		
	Orlando			.559	7		
	Miami Washington	28	10	.737	51/5		
Southeast Division							
	New Jersey	12	22	.353	41/2		
	Toronto			.389	31/2		
	Boston Philadelphia		19	.444	11/2		
			20				

Milwaukee	12	21	.364	9					
Western Conference									
Southwest Division									
	W	L	Pct	GB					
San Antonio	29	8		-					
Dallas	22		.667	5					
Houston	18		.514	10					
Memphis	18	18	.500	101/2					
New Orleans		30	.118	231/2					
Northwest Division									
Seattle	25	9	.735	-					
Minnesota			.500	8					
Portland		19		10					
Denver			.429	101/2					
Utah		24	.351	131/2					
Pacific Div									
Phoenix	31		.861	-					
Sacramento		11		71/2					
L.A. Lakers			.545	111/2					
L.A. Clippers		17							
Golden State	11		.306	20					
Wednesday's games									

Toronto 104, Boston 93
Washington 104, Portland 10
Deltand 57, Monresola 80
Chicago 110, Philadelphia 78
San Antonio 94, Milwauker 91
Denver 95, L.A. Lakers 83
Houston 124, Dellais 114
Miami 98, Golden State 91
Le Cleper

Phoenix at Indiana
Toronto at Philadelphia
Memphis at Charlotte
Atlanta at Boston
Dallas at San Antonio
Orlando at Detroit
Portland at New Orleans
Washington at Milwauke
Miami at L.A. Clippers
Mispecs at Depugs Miami at L.A. Clippers
Minnesota at Denver
Golden State at Seattle
Saturday's games
New York at Chicago
Phoenix at Washington
Charlotte at Atlanta

Spurs 94, Bucks 79

MILWAUKEE — Mason 1-8 0-0 2, Smith 2-4 3-47, Gadzuric 4-6 0-1 8, M.Williams 4-9 0-0 9, Redd 9-23 6-7 24, Fizer 6-12 0-0 12, Pachulia 2-3 5-6 9, Van Horn 0-2 0-0 0, James 3-8 1-2 8. Totals 31-75 15-20 79.

Philadelphia at Detroit Milwaukee at Memphis Orlando at Indiana Portland at Minnesota San Antonio at Houston New Jersey at Dallas Cleveland at Utah L.A. Clippers at Sacram L.A. Lakers at Golden St

Wednesday Raptors 104, Celtics 93

BOSTON — Pierce 8-15 6-7 23, LaFrentz 3-8 2-2 8, Blount 4-8 4-4 12, Welsch 1-4 3-5 5, Pay-ton 2-9 0-0 4, Jefferson 0-6 2-4 2, Davis 9-17 4-5 22, Banks 2-9 1-2 5, Allen 1-2 0-02, Perkins 2-2 0-0 4, McCarty 2-5 0-0 6, Totals 34-85 22-29

3 **TORONTO** — E. Williams 2-3 0-0 4, Bosh 6-13 4-18 26, Araujo 1-4 0-0 2, Peterson 12-22 6-6 7, Alston 3-10 1-2 10, Marshall 1-12-4, Rose 3-2-4, Palacio 0-1 1-2 1, Murray 3-5 0-0 8, a. Williams 3-5 0-0 7, Woods 0-0 1-2 1. Totals 2-7 3 26-34 10-7

32.73 26-24 falst.

Southern Carlot Mark 18—93 Data 28 D-248 D-248

Wizards 104, Trail Blazers 100

PORTIAND - Dateson 6-15: 4-17, Randol-PORTIAND - Subtreson 6-15: 4-17, Randol-6-13-2-19, Stoudanire 10-27: 6-13, Outlaw 23-04 4, Sauffill - 23-2-2, Tellah 6-3-2-2, 23-04, Sauffill - 23-2-2, Tellah 6-3-2-2, 23-04, Sauffill - 23-2-2, Tellah 6-3-2-2, 23-04, Sauffill - 23-2-2, Tellah 6-3-2-2, 24-2-2, Totals 37-81, T-2-3, Dixon 4-6-WASHINGTON - Janison 4-7-3-5, Ill. 46-10-20-57-26, Arenas 11-16-0-3-26, Dixon 4-6-10-20-57-26, Arenas 11-16-0-3-26, Dixon 4-6-Portland - Totals 4-2-6-2, LeTho-Portland - Totals 4-2-6-2, LeTho-Portland - Totals 4-2-2-2, LeTho-- Totals 4-2-2-2, LeT

mas 2-6 -0-34. Totals 42-9-514-39 (104.
Portland

HOUSTON - McGrady 12-19 0-0 30 Ju.Howard 14-19 1-1 29, Yao 5-8 10-13 20, Sura

SAN ANTONIO — Duncan 9-19 3-3 21, Bowen 2-7 0-0 5, Nesterovic 1-4 0-0 2, Parker 8-18 3-4 20, Ginobili 6-13 2-2 15, Barry 4-5 0-0 11, Horry 2-4 0-0 4, Udrih 3-5 2-2 8, Massen-burg 3-5 0-0 6, Brown 0-4 0-0 0, Wilks 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 39-85 10-11 94.

Milwaukee San Antonio San Antonio 22 27 25 20–94
Three-Point Goals—Milwaukee 2-7 (M.Williams 1-2, James 1-3, Redd 0-1, Van Horn 0-1),
San Antonio 6-17 (Barry 3-4, Parker 1-1, Gino-bill 1-4, Bowen 1-6, Brown 0-2), Fouled out—None Rebounds—Milwaukee 47 (Fizer 11),
San Antonio 45 (Duncan 9), Assists—Milwaukee 11 (Redd, James, M.Williams 3), San Antonio 47, George 10, Parker 10, Parker 10, San Antonio 17, A—16,754 (8,500).

Pistons 90. Hornets 76

NEW ORLEANS — Nalion 8-15 0-9 15, Rogers 2-11 0-9 4, P.Brown 6-11 1-2 13, Smith 1-5 3-4 5, Durid 2-5 8, Durid 2-6 0-0, Durid 2-12-27, Goldwire 1-3 0-2, Millicio 2-5 0-0, Durid 0-1-2-27, Goldwire 1-3 0-2, Millicio

Debroit 22 2 1 26 18-99
Three-Point Goals-New Orleans 3-13
(Nachbar 1-2, Davis 1-3, Dickau 1-3, Lynch 0-1, Rogers 0-2, Smith 0-2), Debroit 5-19 (Bill-lups 3-7, Prince 2-3, Rivallace 0-2, Huntter 0-2), Goldwire 0-2, Huntter 0-1, Touled out-0-1, Goldwire 0-2, Huntter 0-1, Touled out-0-1, Huntter 0-1, Touled 0-1, Touled

Magic 87, Timberwolves 80

ORLANDO — Hill 10-16 0-0 20, Howard 2-7 2-3 6, Cato 3-6 0-0 6, Turkoglu 8-16 8-8 26, Francis 7-24 2-2 17, Battle 0-0 0-0, Augmon 4-4-6 4, Kasun 0-0 0-0, Garrity 0-3 0-0 0, Nel-son 3-5 2-5 8, Stevenson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 33-81 18-24 87.

Rockets 124, Mavericks 114

4-8 2-2 12, Wesley 8-16 1-2 21, Mutombo 2-3 0-0.4, Bowen 0-1.2-2, Taylor 1-1.0-0.2, Barry 1-2-2-2, Barret 10-0-0.0, Gaines 0-0-0.0. To tals 47-7 18-2-2 124, 4-14 3-3 14, Nowitzki 10-18-3-4.2, Dampier 2-4-2-5, Armstrong 1-2 0-3, Terry 8-15-4-21, Stackhouse 7-15-10-11 26, Gradley 6-13-0-01, Harris 2-3-0-0, Hend-erson 0-0-0-0, Booth 0-0-0-0. Totals 40-84 2-2-84 114.

22-24 11.4

Mountain
**Moun

Bulls 110, 76ers 78

PHILADE PHIA — I guodala 2-3 2-2 6, Tho-mas 2-7 0-0 4, Jackson 8-17 1-2 17, Iverson 8-21 5-6 21, Salmons 1-7 0-0 3, Korver 3-9 1-9, Skinner 0-0 0-0 0, Williamson 5-9 4-5 1, McKle 1-3 0-0 2, Ollie 1-3 0-0 2, Green 0-3 0-0

Mégica 1,8 0.7, Oligic 1,3 0.9, 2 Green 0.3 0.0
CHICAGO - Devoy 6.3 1.118, ADAIN 6.3 0.0
2, Curry 9.31 6.7 24, Hinrich 6.3 0.0
2, Curry 9.31 6.7 24, Hinrich 6.3 0.0
3, Chicago - Chicago

Nuggets 95, Lakers 83
LALAKUS - Cubiller 43 10-31 18, Odom
412-54 13, Milm 61-30-31 28, Figure 54, 48-3
64, 25-61 3, Milm 61-30-31 28, Figure 54, 48-3
64, 25-62 3, Milm 61-30-31 28, Figure 54, Figure 54, 68-3
60 4, Total 62, Figure 54, Figure

Jazz 115. Suns 108

PRODRIK - Fisher stone 1.7 & 24. Marion F-10 & 20. Stoudenire 5-12 9-11 19, Nash 6-11 6-2 0, Stoudenire 5-12 9-11 19, Nash 7-20 6-0, Hunter 5-20 6-14 (Julia 90 0-0) 6-18 (Julia 90 0-0) 6-18 (Julia 90 0-0) 19, Julia 90 0-18 (Julia 90 0-0) 19, Julia 90 0-18 (Julia 90 0-0) 19, Julia 90 0-18 (Julia 90 0-0) 19, Julia 90 0-19 (Julia

48-971-4.15 11.5

Thoenix 22 20 33 26-108

Utah Point Coals—Proc 22 20 34 26-118

Utah Point Coals—Proc 23 20 34 26-118

Ost 1-2, Barlon 2-6, Nash 2-6, Uniform 0-1, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-14 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-14 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-14 (Nash 2-18), Harring 0-1, Gliricek 0-1, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-16 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-16 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-16 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2, Jacobsen 0-2), Utah 5-16 (Lopez 2-3, Bell 1-2), Harring 0-1, Gliricek 0-1, Jacobsen 0-2, Jacobsen

Clippers 103, Sonics 92

SEATTLE — Lewis 1-8 1-2 4, Evans 4-6 3-5 11, James 1-2 0-0 2, Allen 7-20 7-8 22, Ridnour 6-12 2-2 14, Radmanovic 3-13 0-0 8, Fortson 4-65-513, Daniels 4-10 3-5 12, Collison 2-2 0-0 4, Murray 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 33-80 21-27 92. LA. CLIPPER — Simmons 6-13 6-6 18, LA. CLIPPERS — Simmons 6-13 6-6 18, Brand 7-145-7 19, Kaman 2-9 0-0 4, Maggette 11-19 7-7 31, Brunson 0-3 0-0 0, Moore 1-2 0-0 2, Rebraca 2-4 2-2 6, Kittles 5-8 1-3 11, Martin 4-5 1-2 10, Ross 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 39-79 22-27

103.

Settlingers

Settlingers

**Three-Point Goals-Seattle 5-25 (Radangovic 27, Lewis 1-5, Daniels 1-5, Alen 1-6,

**Martin 1-1, Brunson 6-1, Kittles 6-1), Foulder 1-1, Brunson 6-1, Kittles 6-1, Kittles 6-1, Foundation 1-1, Kittles 6-1, Kittles 6-1,

Heat 98. Warriors 91

coach Van Gundy, Golden State Defensive Three Second, Robinson 2. Ejected—Robin-son, A—18,596 (19,596).

McGrady makes Mays feel his pain

By JAIME ARON The Associated Press

DALLAS — Tracy McGrady's left big toe was bothering him so much that he took off his shoe during the second quarter and limped to the sideline figuring he was done for the night.

The Dallas Mavericks weren't

Halftime treatment and good news from an X-ray got McGrady back onto the court, and he decided to push himself. The result was a tremendous third quarter that carried the Houston Rockets to a 124-114 victory Wednesday night that ended the Mavs six-game winning streak

"When I went to the bench, I was going to shut it down," McGrady said. "But at halftime, we put ice on it and more padding in my shoe. It wore off a little bit. but I was still in pain.

Houston outscored 37-24 in the third, with McGrady putting up 13 points and eight as-sists. He added 10 points in the fourth, finishing with 30 points and 11 assists. The Rockets scored their most points of the season for the second straight game while beating the Mavericks for just the second time in 11

"I was in one of those zones said McGrady, who was 6-for-8 on three-pointers, making all three he tried in the third "When I saw daylight, I was confident I was going to knock the shot

The Mavericks had won their past six games by at least 14 points, so this was their first tight game since before Christmas and they didn't have enough offense to keep up. That's right, a team that was averaging 114.3 points in its past seven games



The Rockets' Tracy McGrady (1) shouts after hitting a three-pointer in the second half as the Mavericks' Jerry Stackhouse looks on.

couldn't find a consistent scorer. at least not when it mattered

Dirk Nowitzki led the Mavericks with 28 points, but had an 18-minute scoreless drought over the middle two periods. Michael Finley, coming off a season-best 33 points, missed nine of his first 10 shots. He finished with 14 thanks to three baskets long after the outcome was settled.

The Rockets took advantage with an 11-2 run early in the third quarter to go ahead for good, then closed the period up nine. They shot 70 percent in the period, down from 72 in the first, and finished at an impressive 61 per-

Dallas' top defender, Josh Howard, was out with an upper respiratory infection, and swingman Marquis Daniels has been out with an ankle injury. Although Darrell Armstrong went from hardly playing the past few weeks to starting, and there were other changes in the rotation, coach Don Nelson expected a better performance - especially going into a 15-day stretch of nine games against mostly quality

"I thought our defense let us down a little bit, but I'm not sure that it mattered that much," Nelson said. "They were making every shot. They had a real good rhythm and flow to their game and we didn't.

foes, starting Friday night in San

Houston is suddenly starting to ut up the numbers it expected. The Rockets are averaging 104.9 in the past 13 games after putting up just 86.9 in their first 22

Coaches discuss changes to poll

Some oppose making votes public

BY CHRIS DUNCAN The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Kv. - College football coaches delayed a vote Wednesday on whether to release the ballots for their weekly poll. though some made it clear they strongly oppose the idea.

"I don't see how that could be anything but a negative." Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer said.

Wyoming coach Joe Glenn said, "I've got no hidden agenda, but you've got nothing good in it. Just over half of the nation's Di-

vision I-A coaches — 59 of 117 — attended the final day of the American Football Coaches Association's annual convention in

AFCA executive director Grant Teaff led a forum on the ESPN/USA Today poll, which came under fire after Texas overtook California for the last at-large bid in the Bowl Championship Series

Six coaches dropped Cal below No. 6 in the final poll, prompting Pac-10 Commissioner Tom Hansen and Cal coach Jeff Tedford to ask the 61 coaches who voted to disclose their ballots. The AFCA voted down the request.

On Wednesday, Teaff handed out a three-question survey to the coaches in attendance. The survey asked if the coaches would: ■ release their ballots every

■ release their ballots at the end of the season only;

and, continue to vote if their ballots were ever publicly released

Teaff said the rest of the coachwould receive surveys by mail. An official vote would not take place until all the surveys had been received, Teaff said.

'We're trying to make a decision based on what we think is best for our game and our teams and our players," Teaff said.

The AFCA twice rejected proposals in the past year to publicly disclose the coaches' ballots Teaff said the more likely change this time was for the coaches to release their hallots at the end of "I don't think they're interested

with dealing with it on a weekly basis," Teaff said. "I don't know why they would be." Auburn coach Tommy Tuber-

ville said publicly disclosing ballots would nut coaches in awkward situations.

"If we release the polls, we're bound to our players," Tuberville said. "They're going to see how we voted, other coaches are going to see. There are a lot of things you don't think about.'

Fulmer said revealing how coaches voted could create bad blood before games.

"If we're getting ready to play somebody or if you rank somebody ahead of your team, that's a bad message to your kids," Fulmer said. "It's different than the writers [poll], because we're dealing with our peers. We're playing against them rather than just reporting about them. That's a big

Teaff said a suggestion to delay the coaches poll until October was dismissed. BCS officials have suggested they'd prefer to see preseason polls eliminated.

"The other issues are more important to us," he said.

Wednesday, NCAA president Myles Brand participated in what Teaff termed a "sobering" discussion about the academic reforms approved at the NCAA convention earlier this week

About 30 percent of the Division I programs will receive one-time warnings from the NCAA, stating that if their graduation rates don't rise, they'll lose scholarships.

"There were some questions and clarifications and I hope the coaches now understand what took place at the convention, Brand said.

Also, the coaches agreed to lobby for a fifth year of eligibility for players. Brand said the issue was not discussed at the convention, and will not come up for a ote when the NCAA Division I Management Council meets in April

However, Brand said the council will vote in April on a proposal to allow teams to play a 12th game every season, beginning in

Teaff said if the extra game is approved, the fifth year of eligibility becomes vital.

'We have guys [coaches] who will redshirt 20 guys," he said. When you take 20 guys off of 85 and you go to 12 games, it doesn't mesh. Something has to happen."

STARS STRIPES

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LSU gives Miles 7-year deal

BATON ROUGE, La. - LSU coach Les Miles will receive a seven-year contract worth \$1.25 million annually, a deal similar to the one the Tigers gave Nick Saban when he was first hired.

Upon approval by the LSU Board of Supervisors, Miles' base salary will be \$300,000 a year with an additional \$600,000 for radio, television and internet work. LSU said Wednesday in a

Miles was hired from Oklahoma State on Jan. 3 to replace Saban, who left LSU to coach the Miami Dolphins.

Saban had the nation's richest contract for a college football coach: a seven-year, \$18.45 million deal he signed after winning a share of the national title for LSU in 2003.

Saban's original LSU contract in 1999 paid him \$1.2 million an-

SPORTS



MLB cracks down on steroids

Plan includes suspensions for first offenses

BY TIM BROWN Los Angeles Times

Baseball has hardened its policy against steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs in an agreement reached between the players' union and owners that will be announced Thursday, sources familiar with the negotiations said Wednesday.

The amendment to the Collective Bargaining Agreement will mandate more frequent testing, random off-season testing and suspensions for first-time offenders, haseball sources said



Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig is expected to announce Thursday that baseball players and owners have reached an agreement on a tougher steroid testing program.

Players' Association chief Don Fehr notified the union's executive board members of the policy changes during a conference call Wednesday. Owners were briefed during their annual meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz., attended by Commissioner Bud Selig.

"I think it's going to entail more testing, some out-season testing, yes, more in-season random testing and stiffer penalties," said New York Mets pitcher Tom Glavine, a senior member of the union.

In light of growing concerns about steroids because of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative scandal, and fearing an erosion of the public's trust in the game, Selig had requested a program more closely resembling that held in the minor leagues, which are not protected by the CBA.

The new policy mirrors the minor league principles "in a lot of ways," a source said, particularly in regard to disciplinary measures and monitoring.

Neither Fehr nor baseball negotiator Rob Manfred could be reached for comAbout the time members of Congress threatened to take action unless baseball reached an agreement on its own — backing Selig in his forceful anti-steroid statements — and shortly after leaked federal grand jury testimony linked Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield to BALCO products, union members authorized Fehr to negotiate an amendment to

the 2002 basic agreement.

"Everybody believed that the program we had in place was having an effect and definitely it was doing what it was designed to the control of the program was seen to the control of the contr

SEE MUR ON PAGE 28

Tar Heels sting Georgia Tech



North Carolina's C.J. Hooker, front, and Georgia Tech's Anthony Morrow battle Wednesday at the Dean Smith Center in Chapel Hill, N.C. No. 3 North Carolina defeated No. 8 Georgia Tech 91-69. See story on Page 29.



Colts getting lots of respect against nemesis New England

Page 27



Hip injury could keep Agassi out of Australian Open

Page 25